1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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abakulumba) and their eldest sons are his two heirs in the chieftainship. Young girls, daughters of neighbouring chiefs, are carried off with a show of force from their fathers' homes, by the young chief's men, who themselves later contribute to the herd of cows sent to regularize the position. The two great wives are thus married not solely with the cows of their husband, but also with those of the men whose sons their sons will one day rule. The duty of arranging the match lies with the village headmen of the old chief, and it is said that they are often guided in their choice by dreams.

The girls who are carried off are just about to reach puberty, and they stay at the house of one of the men of the old chief until their periods begin. When both have reached puberty they are initiated, not at their fathers' houses, as are ordinary girls, but in the country of their husband, and both together. At their initiation the old men and women of the country (contemporaries of the old retiring chief) play the part normally played by a girl's parents and their neighbours, while the young chief and his men take the usual part of a husband and his friends. And then, after the ceremonies are over, the two girls are given to the young chief as his wives. Houses are built for them separately, i.e. in the senior age-village of the new chiefdom for the first wife, in the next senior village for the second wife; and in this separation of dwelling place is already apparent the future division of the chiefdom between their sons.

Within the chiefdom, and among the wives and children of the chief two 'sides' (*imibafu*) are recognized. Usually, in each country there are, at its beginning, at least two age-villages and half the wives of the chief on either side. This distinction of two sides is important in succession, a son from each side eventually inheriting half the country.

From the time of the 'coming out' of the two young chiefs till the day of their own father's death there exists between him and them a delicate balance of prestige and power. Each of the three, traditionally, has judicial authority in his own age-villages, but appeals in difficult cases may be taken from either of the young chiefs and their village headmen to the old chief and his village headmen, while the religious duties of chieftainship are exercised entirely by the old chief. But in the old days it was the young chief who fought and fed men. 'Young chiefs used to lead their

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to bring all the herds of the village for treatment. The father of these twins explained that neighbours would suffer less than relatives, if left untreated, but 'their legs would ache a little *because we eat with them*'. And here we come to an idea which appears in many situations in Nyakyusa life, the idea that contagion is spread through eating together. Relatives of parents of twins are not thought to be in danger until they eat or drink with one of the parents: the ritual is performed so that they may eat together safely. Similarly a murderer and his relatives are thought to be in magical danger from the relatives of the murdered man only if they should eat or drink with them. So too, the bond between neighbours which puts them in danger from the impurity of one of them is the sharing of food.

At the initiation and marriage of a girl, neighbours again assist and identify themselves with the principals. When she reaches puberty a girl is secluded, and her companions in the village—the girls who are her immediate juniors, for the older ones will have joined their husbands—keep her company. Some are her own younger sisters and half-sisters, others are not related at all. Should one girl of the village not join them she is not accused of witchcraft, but it is unusual for one to stay away; to do so would show 'pride' (*amatingo*). These companions (*abapanji*) sleep and eat with the 'bride' (*unsungu*)[1] and share her tasks and lessons, fetching firewood, making mats, learning songs, and listening to the instruction of 'the mothers'. They and the 'bride' go about together as a group and, accompanied by one or two 'mothers', may visit a 'bride' and her maids in another village, the two groups competing in dancing and singing. So keen is the rivalry that formerly, we were told, the visits sometimes led to fighting between the maids and 'mothers' of each 'bride', particularly when the competing groups came from different chiefdoms. At the end of the ritual two of the maids accompany the bride to her husband's house, and spend a few days with her there, sharing the attentions of her husband at night (*vide infra*, p. 87).

During her seclusion the bride avoids her father, whom she refers to as 'father-in-law', and she avoids also all his contem-

[1] *Unsungu* means a girl who has reached puberty but has not yet borne a child. She is usually, though not invariably, betrothed, and her 'husband' has a part in the puberty ritual. There is no exact English translation, and we think that 'bride' is the least misleading in this context.

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poraries, the men of the village. They are forbidden to enter her hut, and if she catches sight of one outside she turns away from him and shields her face with a mat. And at the end of the seclusion each 'village father', as well as her own father, must make her a small gift, before she will greet him. The co-wives and some of the village neighbours of the bride's mother form the group of 'mothers' who treat and instruct the bride, help to provide food for the feasts, and finally take her to her husband. Not all the village neighbours are expected to cook for the marriage feasts of a commoner's daughter, only immediate neighbours and special friends (together with relatives) who have been asked to do so; but if an immediate neighbour is not invited to help he will feel affronted. Twijulege explained that 'If the owner of the homestead overlooks someone who has built close to him, and does not say to him, "They are coming to bring the marriage-cattle for *your* child, please help us to cook", then that friend will be angry, and will think to himself, "Perhaps we are not on good terms (*tutikwangala kanunu*) though I had always thought we were", and he will say to the father of the bride: "Why did you not tell me that they were coming to bring the marriage-cattle for your child that I might help you with the food? I was startled by the rejoicing." ' An old man who had only called one friend, besides relatives and the 'best man', to help cook at the marriage of his daughter, was stigmatized as 'a surly fellow who does not care about being on good terms with people'.

The groom, on his part, is supported by his village-mates, who come in a crowd driving the marriage-cattle, and dancing the stamping marriage dance (*ukukanya nganya*). His mother, who has a share in the ritual and brings gifts of food, follows him, accompanied by some of her co-wives and village neighbours.

Village solidarity is thus exhibited at ceremonies, not only in the allocation of food, but by the manner in which village contemporaries of the same sex rally to each other's help, dance together and, if need be, fight together.

Besides offering sympathy and help when their fellow is in need, it is the duty of neighbours to give him advice, and persuade him to act wisely. If, for example, a man has delayed very long in providing marriage-cattle for his son, his neighbours take the son's part, and try to persuade him to give the cattle. 'Perhaps', said one informant, 'the son may elope with a girl, and

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usually has a separate hut for its girls, to which, we were told, their lovers come secretly by night.

Nyakyusa informants connected the existence of girls' houses with the marriage age. In Ngonde the marriage age of girls is much higher than it is among the Nyakyusa, partly because there are many more Christians (45 per cent as against 16 per cent) who do not allow polygyny, partly because even the girls from pagan families in Ngonde dislike marrying a polygynist, and partly because a much higher percentage of young men are away at work, than from Nyakyusa country. Formerly, they said, the marriage age was higher among the Nyakyusa also, and then the Nyakyusa had *isaka*. It is certain that among the Nyakyusa betrothal of a girl has long taken place before puberty, for the husband plays an essential part in the puberty ritual, and there were always some girls who were betrothed when quite tiny; but the evidence is fairly clear that the average age of betrothal among the pagans has been going down. The Nyakyusa view is that no man in his senses, who is able to marry, will engage a little girl of eight if he can find one approaching puberty; and it is the scarcity of wives that makes men 'marry' little girls. It is also clear that the number of cattle in the country, and their rate of circulation, has increased during the last two decades, so there are 'too many cattle chasing too few brides' with the result that the marriage age of girls has fallen, and the number of cattle given at marriage has increased.

Once she is betrothed, a girl's 'husband' has exclusive sexual rights over her, and she cannot entertain lovers in the *isaka*. The only two occasions on which she may flirt and have external relations with a man other than her husband, are during an initiation ceremony, when the girls of the village who have not yet reached puberty sleep with their fellow who is being initiated, and there entertain young men, and when she accompanies a bride to her husband's house. A bridegroom is expected to have external relations with his wife's two friends, as well as with his wife, on the night they bring her to his house. Love-making at the initiation-marriage ritual is held to be 'part of the ritual' and a means of sex education, and a husband can make no complaint about his 'wife' receiving lovers then, provided that penetration does not take place.

Homosexual practices are said to be very common in the boys'

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mediate ancestors of the participants, and another set which concern chiefdoms and groups of chiefdoms, and are directed towards the immediate ancestors of ruling chiefs and certain distant ancestors of the chiefs' line, heroes in Nyakyusa history. The name of one of these heroes, Kyala, has been used by the missionaries to translate the word 'God', but all the evidence available goes to show that Kyala was, traditionally, but one of several distant ancestors to whom regular sacrifices were made on behalf of a large group of chiefdoms. All the rituals of this type—those directed to family shades, the chiefs' ancestors, and the heroes—are concerned with that which is beneath (*pasi*), not that which is above. Men look to the earth where corpses are buried, not to any sky god.

The theme of the present volume is the rituals celebrated by kinsmen at death, at the puberty and marriage of a girl (the last two events usually coinciding), at birth, especially twin birth, and in misfortune. A further volume will deal with the communal rituals celebrated before the annual break of the rains; whenever public misfortune such as drought, flood, famine, or plague occurs or threatens; before battle; and when a chief is succeeded by his sons, and the younger generation take over power from their elders. There is no circumcision or initiation of men other than the 'coming out' ceremony, when a whole generation takes over responsibility for the administration and defence of the chiefdom from their fathers. Some reference to three of the heroes—Kyala, Lwembe, and Mbasi—is made in texts on the rituals of kinsmen, but our discussion of them is postponed to the second book in which the rituals directed to them are described.

A section of the Nyakyusa people is Christian and its influence on pagan thought and practice is appreciable; however, discussion of this is also postponed to the second book, since it is most evident in the changing concept of Kyala. There, too, the connections between change in ritual and other aspects of the social structure between 1934 and 1955 are analysed.

The Nyakyusa cult of senior relatives (like any ancestor cult) is not intelligible or significant apart from a study of kinship, and it may be argued that this material should be presented only as part of an analysis of Nyakyusa kinship, but we cannot discuss everything at once and some measure of abstraction is necessary. No one ritual among the Nyakyusa is fully intelligible without reference to the whole series of rituals. The principle, propounded forty-five years ago by Professor Radcliffe-Brown, that a symbol

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ritual is powerful. If you do not perform the ritual for your father or perhaps that of your wife then you won't be a person, your body comes to an end and you die, but you are present, you are still alive, you do not die when the body comes to an end, you take faeces as in the ritual. But when they bring millet and say: 'This is so-and-so's, and this so-and-so's' (naming him whose ritual you have omitted) and brew beer and drink it, then you die.

QUESTION: How do the dead appear to us?

ANSWER: They appear before our eyes at night. You dream and in the morning say: 'I was with the so-and-so's in the night, with the so-and-so's!

QUESTION: Where do you go (at death)?

ANSWER: When we die we go above.

QUESTION: That's a new thing?

ANSWER: Yes, indeed, formerly we said we went below; our fathers and grandfathers said that. But we now say we go below to rot and stink only but since we look toward home when they bury us perhaps the heart (*indumbula*) goes above (*kumwanya*) and that is home. We have seen this in European times in books. No, I am not a Christian and I cannot read, I've just learnt this. . . .

KALUNDA (a doctor) AND MWAIJUMBA: The *ikipiki* medicine put into the beer and lees at 'the shaving of the sprouting hair' is the same medicine as that which we eat at the pumpkin-seed ritual. The *ikipiki* of the death ritual and the puberty ritual and the birth ritual is one and the same, but the medicine for twins is different. . . . There is one *ikipiki* used in all the three rituals—puberty, birth, and death—but to it is added another medicine which is different for each of the three. *Ikipiki* is our kinship, it is our blood (*ikipiki bo bukamu bwetu, lyo ilopa lyetu*); when my wife has borne a child and no one wipes its mouth with the *ikipiki* it means it is not my child, it is just a bastard from the veld, it is no relative of mine but a stranger. In the puberty ritual it is the same, we treat the girl with the *ikipiki* of her husband. She moves from our lineage, from that of her father, she is now a stranger, not their relative (*ikusama nkikolo kyetu, kubagwise, mundu leleno, aka nkamu gwabo*). When someone has died it is the same. We eat food together with the deceased, the shade, and his blood. It is like the Swahili custom of eating each other's blood to create kinship. It means: 'You were our kinsman from afore-time, but now it is finished, you are a stranger.' But the medicine for the twin ritual is separate, it is quite different.

2. IN KUKWE COUNTRY

The Kukwe ritual of death differs in detail from that of Selya and MuNgonde, but it is performed with the same overt purpose: to drive away the dead from the bodies and dreams of the

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even defaecate in the house. And at the inheritance, when I have inherited the women, they go to their own homes with a bull if I am wealthy, or perhaps three shillings. They go back to their fathers with the dirt on them—*ingotolo*!

QUESTION: Where does the *ingotolo* come from when you do not treat them?

MWAFULA: Kyala is startled and you gasp with *ingotolo*, your breath is short.

QUESTION: Does the husband also go to his place?

MWAFULA: Yes, he always returns to his father's.

QUESTION: Why the two leaves representing a man and a woman at the hitting the ground and saying: '*Syeku, syeku*'?

MWAFULA: Because we are two [holding up two fingers], a man and a woman. Formerly when someone died as a bachelor they took a leaf of the sweet banana and said: 'It is your wife.' They buried it with him, saying: 'Go to the land of the shades because you were never married.'

QUESTION: What does the mocking at shaving mean?

MWAFULA: It is one with stealing the plantain stem. We mock them meaning, may they escape, and not take rubbish from the rubbish heap. And at the shaving of the hair we drive him away, saying: 'Go to your fellows.' He has been alone, he was on the road, may he go.

Porokoto the Chief admitted that the wearing of leaves and bananas in the rituals of death and of puberty were symbols of fertility (*ifimanyilo fya mbapo*); the plantain represents the penis, the sweet banana represents the clitoris, 'for in the old days they wore leaves only, no cloths'. In the puberty ritual the wearing of leaves and bananas is the same. It is a sign of fertility: 'the ritual is now finished and the girl is someone's wife.'

Mwaijumba, who provided the beer of inheritance for the ritual of Njobe Nani, explained to us as he drank: 'We drink beer to drive away our friend. It means that everything is finished: "Come to your house frequently now. It is finished! May the fathers [i.e. the other shades] receive him! May he not return! We have poured out this beer for you, it is finished." '

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CHAPTER IV

THE RITUAL OF PUBERTY AND MARRIAGE

I. IN SELYA AND MUNGONDE

(*a*) *The events*

881 585 584 836 THE puberty ritual for girls among the Nyakyusa is fused with the marriage ritual. Girls are usually betrothed well before puberty and they may live with their 'husbands' for some time before they grow up, for the view of most Nyakyusa is that a girl should become accustomed to her husband gradually and that it is good for her to visit him from time to time, sweeping his house, cleaning the byre, drawing water and cooking for him, and learning the art of love-making with him and no one else. While she is still very immature it is insisted that he should only have intercourse with her *inter crura*, but when she is approaching puberty he often has full intercourse with her. No legal case can be brought against him in court if he does so, provided that he has not forced or frightened her, but his friends may tell him he is foolish, and is 'teaching his wife adultery', since now he can have no proof, in the physical examination at puberty, that she has not slept with other men. No stigma attaches to the girl; if it is her husband who has deflowered her she is acclaimed in the ritual as a virgin. In some pagan families, however, notably those of chiefs, girls are not allowed to visit their husbands before puberty. The girl's father has the right to [171] refuse it, for before the ritual a wife is only 'borrowed'. Unlike the neighbouring Bemba, the Nyakyusa are not anxious lest the girl should conceive before her first menstruation—if she should do so the ritual is performed in the ordinary way—but many fathers dislike letting their daughters go before the main bulk of the marriage cattle have been handed over. Opposition on the part of the missions and the Administration to early marriage also influences the more sophisticated. The period of betrothal is long, for pagan [145] girls are commonly engaged from about 8 years old onwards, and the average age of puberty appears to be between 15 and 16.[1]

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and the average age of puberty appears to be between 15 and 16.[1]

With the onset of first menstruation the ritual (*ubunyago bwa-busungu*) starts immediately: it is begun even for a girl not yet betrothed, though for her it cannot be completed. The main acts are a treatment of the 'bride' (*unsungu*) with medicines to fortify her against the dangers of menstruation and intercourse; seclusion at her father's homestead and a driving of the shades of his lineage from her body that she may conceive by her husband; instruction in the duties of a wife; examination for virginity; and the exchange of feasts between her husband's family and her own to celebrate her maturity and virginity.

The first treatment is with a medicine called *undumila*. 'If the girl grows up at her father's place we, her mothers, treat her at once; if at her husband's she is sent home to us, if it is near, but if it is far away, her husband's mothers treat her there.' She must take the medicine before she tastes any food after the onset of menstruation. A pungent-tasting root is pushed through the tip of a funnel or 'cup' made of a leaf of the bark-cloth tree, and salt is poured into the cup. The girl takes the tip of the root in her mouth and pulls it inward with her teeth, thus causing the salt to trickle into her mouth. Her mother also makes millet porridge and adds to it a medicine, *ikipiki*, and gives a little to her, burying the rest under the hearth of the hut.

She is then secluded in her mother's hut. Her girl friends who have not yet reached puberty prepare a litter of banana leaves for her to sit and sleep upon, and they keep her company (*ukupanja*), hence their name, *abapanji*. They come 'to cheer their fellow that she should not be left alone'. They sleep with her on the litter, and spend the greater part of their days there, learning to depilate and adorn themselves and, some say, to stretch the vagina by manual manipulation. Food for them is provided by the bride's mother, and on the litter they entertain the young men of neighbouring boys' villages, singing and dancing, and cuddling. In a bride's hut intercourse *inter crura* is permitted, and no 'husband' can claim damages if his betrothed wife lies with another young man there, unless penetration has taken place. On moonlight nights the girls

[1] Information from Christian women who knew the exact ages of their daughters and of pagan contemporaries of their daughters. Cases of first menstruation ranging from the ages of 12 to 18 were cited, but those under 14 years old were regarded as unusually young. The mothers' information was confirmed by a woman missionary who ran a school for Christian adolescent girls in the district.

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881 On moonlight nights the girls
524 play special games in the courtyard, such as 'Knock, knock, little man'; they put bits of banana leaves in the forks of the fingers and toes and sing: 'Knock, knock, little man; knock, knock, little woman!' Then they spread wide their arms and legs and fingers and toes and knock them together. The leaves that fall out when they do so are collected and hidden some distance away. Then they all separate and hunt for them, singing:

'We look for our fellow the barren one.
I don't know where she is, the barren one.'

When they find the leaves they pile them up and then each snatches one, singing:

'Here she is, here she is!'

Then the game ends.

Another traditional song goes:

'Little mouth, little mouth, She-who-makes-her-friends-quarrel.'

But many of the songs the maids sing with the young men are just current popular songs.

881 'The maids are friends for the bride to amuse herself with. They
883 amuse themselves with young men, singing, and if some other bride is secluded at the same time, they go and compete against her and her maids in singing.' At the seclusion of Mwaihojo's daughter described below, a dozen girls, all a little younger than herself, kept her company. Five were her own half-sisters, one was a wife of her father who had not yet reached puberty, one a daughter of her father's sister, and four were daughters of her father's neighbours.

864 Although a bride's hut is the centre for sex play, women who are
881 sleeping with their husbands and are therefore 'heavy' (*nsito*) with semen, do not enter it and may not cook for her, for any contact with them is felt to be dangerous to her. Her own mother refrains from intercourse until her daughter has gone to her husband.

881 The bride is not confined to the hut (as among many other African peoples) but is free to move about the immediate neighbourhood. Her movements are, however, limited by the taboo on crossing a stream, the need to avoid sexually active women, and the avoidance of her father and other men of his village, as well as her in-laws. When she leaves her hut she is accompanied by her

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maids and always carries a mat or cloth to screen her face from her father and his contemporaries, her father's full sisters, her older brothers,[1] and her 'mothers-in-law' (*abakamwana*).[2] These she must fear and respect (*ukutila*) and so avoid. Her father-in-law and his brothers she avoids altogether from the time of her engagement, or at least after she has reached the age of 8 or 9. Her companions do not *ukutila* with her, though those of them who are already betrothed will, of course, avoid their own fathers-in-law.

During the period of seclusion the girls have two specific tasks: to weave the fine mats used as beds, and to fetch firewood. Every bride should take to her husband's home at least one fine mat (*ubunyasa*) which she has made herself, as well as several coarse ones (*imitefu*),[3] and weaving a fine mat is a lengthy task, occupying a skilful woman a month. Each girl weaves for herself, but the firewood that each must fetch is stacked in the bride's mother's loft. The bride also occupies herself hammering out bark-cloth, pleating it for the strip worn between the legs, and decorating bark-cloth belts (*vide* plate 5), so that she may have the fresh ones required during the ritual, and a supply to take with her to her husband's; but this work is not emphasized as an obligation: rather it is a recreation. Women take great pride in the decoration of their belts—we watched several brides making them and handing them round for the admiration of their fellows. The maids may work in the fields if required to do so, but the bride herself does not, and 'she gets fat because she does not have much work to do'. The whole ritual normally lasts about three months, but if, for some reason such as a pressing need to go out to work, the husband is in a hurry for its completion, various acts may be telescoped. The time-table depends primarily on when the marriage-cattle and food for the various feasts are ready.

From the time of first menstruation until she does it ritually, a bride should neither wash nor oil herself. The prohibition is felt to be a very onerous one and some girls now break it, but women said 'in the old days we did not wash'. 'Girls nowadays are more cunning. We were afraid.'

[1] Some informants denied that she avoided father's sisters or brothers. Others insisted that she must avoid them because 'brothers are fathers, and father's full sisters are father'.

[2] i.e. her husband's own mother and other women he calls mother. In this account the plural 'mothers' indicates own and classificatory mothers.

[3] Nyakyusa beds are made of layers of mats laid on rollers between two logs at head and foot. One chief's bed we noted was made up of sixty-eight mats.

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783 ●881 If a bride is her husband's first or second wife[1] (but not if she is a junior wife) she washes with him ritually at his homestead. The officiant (*unyago*), who may be her husband's own mother or some other mature woman chosen by her, pours out medicated water, and groom and bride wash together, his hands being above and hers below. This usually takes place about a month after her seclusion, but neither it nor the following events are timed to coincide with periods.

881 584 [431] In one ritual we watched, that of the daughter of Chief Mwaihojo, the go-between in the marriage and the brother of the groom came to fetch the bride for the ritual washing (*ukusukusula*), bringing her a small gift of 10 cents, four weeks after her first menstruation. She washed in medicated water with her husband at his house and returned to her father's the same night (May 19). Next day, about 3 p.m., the groom's 'mothers' (*abakamwana*), twelve of them, and one girl, arrived carrying six stems of bananas and four enormous pots of curds for the ritual of *ukwingesia*, 'putting her in'. They approached, singing two of the ritual songs:

Litubuke, litubuke,
Tubuke mwailugula.
Let us go, let us go,
Let us go for ever and never return.

and

Akasyunguti kambagila
Paliti po pabuko bwangu.
The *syunguti* tree suited me,
The place is like that of my own in-laws.

The bride was carried first by one and then by another of her 'mothers' (*abanna*)[2] while a compact group of mothers and maids, with the bride raised high in their midst, danced to and fro. And all the time she held a mat to shield her head and face. After five minutes or so the dancing stopped and the 'mother-in-law' sat down in the shade, as Kyobwe (a senior wife of Mwaihojo who acted in place of the bride's own mother who was divorced) came to greet them formally and receive their gifts of food. Meanwhile the bride herself knelt on the ground beside Kyobwe's hut, her head covered with a mat, and surrounded by her maids. Presently

[1] Informants differed on this point. Some maintained that chiefs alone washed with two wives, commoners with one only. Others insisted that commoners also washed with two.

[2] i.e. her father's wives, and wives of his brothers and neighbours.

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the groom's mothers began to dance again. They approached the group of girls and the groom's own mother took the mat off the kneeling bride and spread a large scarlet cloth over her. Then she lifted her on to her shoulders and danced with her. The two parties coalesced and danced together, singing the ritual song *Tukulelela akela* (We sing a dirge). Everyone was smiling and joyful despite the song. By 3.40 the dancing was over and a large mat was spread for the 'mothers-in-law' to sit down in the shade. The bride knelt again with bent head covered by her mat and surrounded by her maids.

At this point Mwaihojo, her father, began scolding angrily because the groom's party had not brought a bull. 'Always when people come to marry my daughters they bring a bull, always. It looks as if the girl had been to visit her husband and you had found fault with her and did not like her.' The groom's mothers replied: 'We are poor.'

Mwaihojo: 'How can you say you are poor? You can find the marriage-cattle, you say. Why didn't you bring some of them? Then I would have killed one to eat now. See, I have killed a bull already. If I had known that you were not going to bring one I'd have killed another.'

The groom's mothers sat with downcast heads. For a commoner's daughter bananas and milk are adequate for the *ukwingesia* feast, but a chief has the right to expect a bull.

Presently the groom's own mother and one of her companions entered Kyobwe's hut to roast bananas and grind some of the bark of a tree they had brought for medicine. The powder was put into a small calabash with water. The bride knelt in the doorway of Kyobwe's hut and, as her mother-in-law poured out the medicated water, she washed her hands and wrists and mouth in it. The bride's half-brother, a lad of 15 or 16 years, was washed also, standing by the doorway of Kyobwe's hut, though he was most reluctant to co-operate. He kept looking towards his elder brother Lazarus, a Christian, and did not submit until Lazarus said: 'All right, go ahead!' Kyobwe, seeing his reluctance, said: 'You need not wash if you don't wish to, it doesn't matter. Perhaps we'll leave it out as it's European times now.' Then finally she said: 'Well, just hold out one hand,' and she washed it. Had the bride been the eldest daughter of either of her father's two senior wives he would have washed in place of her brother, and had her own mother not been divorced she would have washed also.

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[381] 334 One of the women of the groom's party then fetched two banana leaves, one of sweet banana and one of plantain, and put them down in Kyabwe's hut. Meantime the mother of the groom changed the bride's belt and the bark-cloth worn between the legs, dressing her in new ones, and burying the old cloth, soiled by first menstruation, in a bundle of dry banana leaves. These she placed on top of the fresh leaves already mentioned, covered the pile with a small rough mat, and sprinkled it with powdered medicine. The bride knelt on the mat and, with head bent, ate roast bananas also sprinkled with the powdered medicine, which her mother-in-law handed to her. Her young brother who had washed with her also shared the bananas. After this the bride is free to wash, but not yet to oil herself.

The groom's mothers were feasted on meat and bananas—two large and two small basketfuls—and returned home. The atmosphere all through the ritual was one of rejoicing, and it was markedly a women's affair. The chief and several other men were present but, apart from his scolding of the women for not bringing a bull, the chief played no part at all.

[382] According to strict custom the groom's mothers should have come a second time with gifts of food (*ukwambalala*)[1] to cement the friendship, but since the groom was in a hurry to get to work on the Lupa gold-fields this act was omitted. 'They brought the two lots of food together,' we were told, 'some of the milk and bananas were for the *ukwingania* and some for the *ukwambalala*.'

[383] 335 Three weeks later (June 14) the groom, with his go-between and other friends, brought the main body of marriage-cattle (*ubukwe*), and they danced the stamping dance (*ukukanya agogo*) in the bride's father's courtyard and on the litter of the ordination hut, brandishing their spears as they stamped to the war rhythm. The bride's companions and mothers danced in a separate group, one mother carrying the bride on her shoulders. A lavish feast of cooked food was set before the groom and his friends, and they in their turn scattered pieces of meat and cobs which the bride's maids and 'mothers' scrambled for. Meantime a quarrel broke out between the bride's father and her brothers over the distribution of the marriage-cattle.

[384] 337 Six weeks after the *ukwingania* (July 29) the bride, accompanied by two of her father's wives, two of her maids, and a third girl invited because she was a good singer, went to wash ritually again

[1] *Ukwambalala*: to give a present for the first time to a new friend.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F7017 Ngonde F7017
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at the groom's home (*ubwikamile*). The party was given a hen when they arrived and a second the next morning. The groom and some of his friends spent the night with the bride and her friends. (He and she lie together on this occasion but do not yet have full intercourse.)[1] In the morning the mother-in-law shaved the bride's head, eyebrows, and eyelashes, leaving only a small tuft on the nape of her neck. Then she mixed water with powdered medicine and poured it for groom and bride to wash. The groom washed his hands and mouth only, the bride her hands and mouth and whole body. During her seclusion she might not use oil or the red powder favoured as a cosmetic by Nyakyusa women,[2] but after this third washing she was free to do so, and she oiled herself meticulously. Meantime the groom was shaved by one of his friends.

On the same day the bride returned to her father's homestead with her own party and seven 'mothers' of the groom who brought five stems of bananas, a pot of water, and a small bull for the ritual of 'clearing out the litter' (*ukusopa ulufundo*). She herself was wearing the skin of a bull over her head—'she wears any skin she can get hold of'. One of the groom's party shaved off the last tuft of her hair and buried it carefully in the *ulufundo*, the litter of banana leaves on which she had slept and sat during her seclusion. Had her own mother been present she would have shaved also and so should the brother, but he did not do so. The groom's mother and Kyelwa (representing the bride's mother) carried out the litter to the edge of the banana plantation surrounding the homestead. As they did so they whispered to each other. Kyelwa said the bride was a little liar. Her husband had offered her ca. to take to her mothers and she had refused it saying: 'No, they swear at me and grudge me food.' 'She's your child,' said the mother-in-law. 'No,' said Kyelwa, 'she's another woman's child, she's a foolish child.' Every scrap of litter in the hut was carefully collected and a little of the soil below it scraped off and carried out with the leaves. All who had helped with the clearing washed their hands carefully.

Then the groom's mother made a basin of two banana leaves close to the pile of litter. Into it she poured the water her party had brought with them, and sprinkled in powdered medicine in

[1] One or two informants maintained that 'she must not refuse him now or he will refuse to cook with her, saying: "She is not my wife."' But others were insistent that according to strict custom only intercourse was ever allowed. Full intercourse at this time would make nonsense of the abridge ritual which follows.

[2] Formerly also by men: cf. O. Gerrard, *Im Land der Wapoka* (1899), p. 158.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F917 Nyonde F917
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137 the form of a cross. The bride knelt down and carefully washed
139 her whole body. When she had done so the groom's mother told one of her party to light the pile of litter. As it blazed up, the bride leapt across it. Three of her maids and a married half-sister had plucked banana suckers, of the sort used for propagating bananas, and they struck her with them as she leapt back and forth over the fire. She was nervous, though the jump was easy, and her maids jeered at her. Then she returned to Kyelwe's hut and dried herself in the sun. Now that the litter was burnt she had come out of her seclusion and was free to sleep on ordinary mats; from the morning of seclusion to the coming out, she could only sleep on the litter, except for the night preceding the burning which she spent with her husband.

144 The mothers of the groom were feasted on sweet potatoes and
145 curds provided by the bride's family, and there was a discussion as to whether the bull the groom's party had brought was 'milk to eat with the bananas' for the bride's family, or 'the bull of virginity'. The bride's father insisted that it was only a relish for the feast and he did not prepare the beer for the final act of the ritual. Two weeks later the bride eloped with her husband because he had not got another bull to bring her father, and the final rites were never performed for her.

149 On the night before the ritual of 'clearing the litter' the bride's father should put millet to soak for beer, and when it is ready the groom's mothers come for the *ilimelo* and *ukufunda*, that is, to 'shave the sprouting hair' and instruct the bride; but for the daughter of Mwandu, for whom we watched it performed, it was long delayed. She had reached puberty seven months previously and before that had lived for three months with the man who had first betrothed her, but he had been unable to find sufficient cattle for the marriage, and the ritual was completed with another man.

153 The groom's 'mothers' arrived about one-thirty, by which time everyone was getting impatient. The men had nearly finished their beer and grumbled that the groom's party was late, and the bride herself was begging her mother to be allowed to go and bathe. Her mother replied emphatically: 'No, no, how can you go? The mothers-in-law will wash you and dress you in brass body-rings. That's the ritual.' Six women came in the groom's party—his own mother, his sister, two 'village mothers', and two young married women of the groom's village. A large mat was spread for

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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864 little older than herself, rather than at the formal admonition by her mothers, though a little is given them also.[1] She is especially [302] warned to depilate herself regularly. 'If she is hairy her husband will complain to the mothers and they will beat her.' The maids listen to the instruction along with the bride, and since every girl keeps several of her immediate seniors company before she grows up herself, no young woman can be left in doubt as to her duties as a wife.

• 881 585 At the shaving of the sprouting hair the 'bull of puberty' (*ingambala jabusungu*) should be killed if the bride is found, on examination by her mothers and those of the groom, to be a virgin, or if the husband has told the women that he himself has deflowered her. Mwaasofu's complaint at the ceremony just described was that the groom's party had not brought the bull ...though he had told them she was a virgin; ... and that she could not go to her husband until it had been provided.

At another puberty ritual which we attended, the bull was duly brought and, after examining the girl, the mothers announced her virginity with the cry of triumph (*ukalala*), and shouted: 'It is ours, it is ours.' They rushed through the courtyard dancing and applauding. Before the examination the bull had been tied up near the mothers, and immediately the joyful announcement was made it was killed. The meat of this bull is divided between the bride's mothers, her father's kinsmen with whom he exchanges cattle, and his immediate neighbours. The ritual portion, the *ijimmapa*, cut from the top of the right foreleg, is taken by her father to his ritual grove of bananas and there he prays, saying: 'You, so-and-so (naming his father), since I have eaten the food of others (non-relatives) may she flourish at her husband's.' Another informant's version of the prayer was: 'I am eating the bull for my daughter, may she bear children!' A third said: 'Here is the meat! I have eaten the food of others, come out a little, may she bear a child at her husband's!'

If the bride is not a virgin the bull is not killed. It must be returned. Informants repeatedly implied, in talking of the ritual, that everyone knew beforehand whether the bride was virgin or not. 'If she is not a virgin we only do a little ritual, there is but one

[532] [1] Our informants maintained that clay images were not used as a medium of instruction, as among the Bemba, though Nyakyusa girls would sometimes make out of clay almost identical with one shown for the Kui in F. Fülleborn, *Deutsch Ost-Afrika*, Band IX, Atlas, plate no. 28, 30, 31, 32.

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vessel of milk and two stems of bananas. We do not carry her in triumph. The mothers-in-law do not bring the powdered medicine.' One informant maintained that the bride was always examined before the washed with her husband (*if she was a chief wife*) and we once saw the bride examined at the *akwingwia* ritual, but the examination before handing over the bull is the only one mentioned by most people. What is certain is that virginity must be publicly demonstrated in the ritual and that it is honoured.

After the shaving and instruction, the bride goes round her father's village visiting the men who have not already given her a gift. She is accompanied by the wife of the go-between who represented her father in the marriage negotiations. Each of her father's fellow villagers (as well as her elder brothers and her [illegible] gives her something—a tortoise, a chicken, a calabash, a spearhead, or some coins, as he greets her. These the bride divides between her maids, the officiant who treated her in the ritual, her husband, and herself; to the wife of the go-between is due one pot of the beer brewed for the shaving ritual, to take home to her husband.

If the agreed number of marriage-cattle have been handed over, the bride's father puts millet to soak for beer immediately after the rite of instruction has been completed and the bull of puberty eaten. When the brewing is ready the bride is formally taken to her husband's house (*ukwisola*) by a 'mother' and one or two of her maids. Her own mother never goes—the woman of the party is usually a junior wife of the bride's father or the wife of the go-between. They take with them one or two pots of beer, a basketful of plantains to roast for her husband, two or three cooking pots, a log of firewood, a calabash of light ointment (*iyumbu*), and a little pot of brown ointment (*indubi*) for anointing her husband and his friends in the village. 'What the wife brings when she comes for the first time is for all the men of the village to use to anoint themselves. They come every day to use it until it is finished.' These ointments are brought by every wife but they are especially important if the bride is her husband's first wife, and it is his bachelor neighbours who mostly use them. The bride also brings the fine mat and several coarse ones which she has woven during her seclusion, bark-cloths she has made for herself, and three hearth bricks (*amafigo*) carefully moulded for her by her mother out of clay and manure mixed with medicines. These are set up in her

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taboo, and the practical difficulties of observing the taboo if fathers and sons live in the same village is cited as a reason for the age-village organization.[1]

The marriage ritual may be said to finish with the eating of the *ilikalaga*, but avoidance of father-in-law and daughter-in-law continues until death and no clear line can be drawn between the marriage ritual proper and the rituals of pregnancy and birth which follow.

It is plain from the events described that the *ubunyago bwe-bwanga* is a marriage as well as a puberty ritual and that the husband and his family play an essential part in it, but if a girl is not betrothed before puberty a curtailed ritual is still performed for her when she grows up. She drinks the *undumila* medicine, she washes with a brother, and her mothers put her formally into the dust of lovemaking. They cover the vaginal flames, and they call her brothers to call their friends to help dance the stamping dance. The liner is cleared by her mothers in due course, and she is shaved and instructed. When she is eventually married, only the rites of slaughtering the bull of virginity, taking her to her husband, and returning with the *ilikalaga* are performed. She does not wash with him ritually.

(F) *The overt purpose and symbolism*

The avowed purpose of the *ubunyago* ritual is to protect the physical and mental health of the girl and to ensure her fertility. 'If the ritual is not performed the girl will fall ill, go mad, or not bear children.' Numerous informants were agreed on this point. Angumbwike expanded it, saying: 'It is said that if they do not perform the ritual of *ubunyago* the bride will go mad. When she is sick of the *undumo* they perform the ritual. If the doctor says: "Those below are angry," then the father of the girl takes water and prays in the banana grove saying: "My father and my grandfather, let the child recover from her sickness." Sometimes the doctor says: "The *na-mala-ni's* (naming a village) have cursed her"; then the father seeks a bull and they eat it. It is the curse which comes from the mouths of people when many whisper saying: "Why have they not performed the ritual? Why have they not performed it?" It comes from their evil breath.' Neglect of the puberty ritual is therefore thought both to anger the shades and to shock the neighbours, who expect to feast on this occasion.

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 80-6.

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881 751 The first act of the ritual, the giving of the *undumile*[1] medicine to the girl, is a symbol of sexual intercourse, and it is thought to be a prophylactic against pain in intercourse, frequent or painful periods, and injury from contact with those who are 'heavy'. 'It is given so that her belly may not be painful,' said Mwaisumo's mother, an elderly woman. Kasitile's wife explained: 'The pungent root is the penis of the husband, the cup is her vagina, the salt, also pungent, is the semen of her husband. Biting the root and eating the salt is copulation.' Mwakionde's wife gave a similar interpretation:

881 751 The *undumile* is put through the leaf of a bark-cloth tree, shaped into a cup, and it is a sign of man and woman, the penis in the vagina. It is similar to the plantains which we give her when we wash her. The plantains are a symbol of the husband. If we do not give her the *ikipili* medicine the blood never dries up, and it is the same with the *undumile*. If it is not given she constantly has periods and is barren. Yes, some have a period twice in one month—those who have rotted. Only a few are like this, not many. . . . The *undumile* is given to the girl at once, in the month as soon as she grows up, so that she can go about without fear; otherwise, if she washes without having had it, then a heavy one may walk over her footprints, that is overstep her, and she will not bear a child, she menstruates continually.

Kasitile's wife said much the same: 'If the heavy ones have overstepped her, her body rots. The man is not sterile, but the woman is; the man's semen is fertile, but the woman has painful periods. It is the pain of periods we symbolise in the sharpness of the *undumile* and salt.'

827 834 The heavy ones (*abasite*), feared both during the puberty ritual and by a mother with a new-born child, are those who sleep with their husbands. They include women both before and after conception. 'When the pregnancy is advanced and the husband has left off sleeping with his wife, then she is not heavy and she can keep a mother with a new-born baby company and hold the baby. A man who is sleeping with a woman is also heavy. They say: "He will overstep us." ' This was the statement of Mwakionde's wife and Kasitile, questioned separately, confirmed every point. We then asked Kasitile: 'How is the heaviness (*abasite*) from lying with a man dangerous to those going through puberty and childbirth?'

Kasitile: 'Because those who are with their husbands are heavy, they are strong, their fellow the bride (*amasenge*) is empty, light in

[1] *Undumile* is derived from *ukudumila*: to bite, to be painful.

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again an acknowledgment of kinship. 'If she washed outside it would mean that she was not the daughter of her father.'

The two fresh leaves of plantain and sweet banana on which the officiant places her soiled bark-cloth, and on top of which she kneels to eat bananas are, as already stated, symbols of male and female. Everyone understood this. Fewer people were aware of the symbolism of eating the banana, but Kasitile and one or two others were fully conscious of it and forthright in discussion. He said:

> At the 'putting her in' (*ukwingwia*) the mothers-in-law bring a new bark-cloth and dress her in it; the old one is thrown away on the litter. They mix together bananas and *ikipiki* medicine which she receives. Don't you understand? They treat her. The plantain is the symbol of the man, of his penis, we are treating her, may she 'cook well' for her husband [i.e. be proficient in intercourse], may she bear children. She eats on that bark-cloth which means may the blood go to make children, this is your husband. Eating is a symbol (*ikimanyilo*) of sexual intercourse. She eats the plantain, meaning she has intercourse with her husband.

He connected this with the admonition at the end of the ritual. When she eats the banana nothing is said, it is only implied, but at the drinking of beer they teach her, saying: "Look after your husband well; if you are sweeping the house and he catches hold of you don't be startled, accept him, and catch hold of him also. . . . Men when they do this beget children." '

The second washing at the groom's, which is performed for every wife and not only for a senior one, is interpreted as a cleansing ritual. In the morning the officiant calls the husband and wife and says: 'Come and wash now and clean off the filth.'

Shaving is both a purification and a sign of the completion of the ritual. 'The hair of a girl who has reached puberty is the filthiness of puberty, of the menstrual blood which she produces then. She throws it away.' Mwakwelebeja and his wife said: 'The shaving is to show that she has awakened to puberty (*alembuzile ukuunga*). During the ritual she did not shave. We perform the rite of shaving that she may begin to shave again, and to let her smear herself with brown ointment. It is like a burial. If a man's close relative dies he does not shave or wash.' Mwaihojo said: 'The shaving is to show that the *ukuunga* ritual is finished.'

Clearing the litter which is 'filthy', contaminated with the menstrual blood of the girl, is also a symbol of purification. The washing in a leaf basin into which *ikipiki* medicine had been

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sprinkled in the form of a cross was interpreted by Lyandileko (the woman doctor already quoted) as the means by which the taboo on a bride crossing a stream was removed. 'We give her *ikipiki* to wash with that she may not fear streams. It is taboo to cross water while she is in the puberty ritual. Here I give her the *ikipiki* so that she may cross. If she crosses before she has been treated she grows thin. She will be like a stream [i.e. her periods will be very heavy].' Another informant remarked that if a bride crossed water before she was treated, the flow of menstrual blood would be excessive. Kasitile interpreted this rite rather differently. He said: 'It is to tell her not to break the commandment with the man. . . . "Do not break the commandment, do not step over him. When you lie down, let the man get up first." It is taboo (*mwiko*) for the woman to get up first and step over (*ukukilanya*) me, the man. My legs would swell up immediately. Sprinkling medicine thus [in a vertical line] is the man. He must get up first. Sprinkling thus [in a horizontal line] is the woman. She must follow.' Probably there is a double symbolism, as in several other rites. Both Lyandileko and Kasitile were experts on ritual and open in conversation with us.

Lyandileko explained the jumping over fire in a whisper: 'It means, Kagile (M. W.), that she will never begin again. She is going to do this at her husband's.' Angombwike said:

> It is to give the girl fire, to say: 'Do not burn there at your husband's.' It means: 'Now you have grown up, you are a woman. I have made fire for you (*ngupele umoto*).' For when a girl has run off as a child and been deflowered, then her mothers say: 'When shall we make fire for you? We cannot give it to you properly.' And at cooking she burns her hands, perhaps the water for the porridge spills over her hands and burns them. We hear that formerly they gave her fire, a torch of burning grass, to take to her husband's and kindle fire there, but they have left that. She jumps over fire, that is to give it to her.

The rite was also interpreted as a test of virginity. 'If a bride clears the fire she is virgin, if she falls in she has been foolish with men.'

The symbolism here is doubtless complex, but of the various informants Lyandileko, by reason of her status and personality, carries most weight, and I think it is probably correct to regard the jumping over fire both as a *rite de passage* and as a symbol of intercourse.

The cloth put on the bride like a tail after she has washed

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881 585 at the stream comes from the girl's father.[1] He spits on it and gives it to her mothers to dress her in at the stream.' (Kasitile.) Angombwike explained further:

> Dressing her in it means her father has made her grow up. It means: 'Now she is a woman let her act like a woman.' They symbolize the genitals (*ikisepe*) of the man, because among us, according to Nyakyusa custom, in front is a woman and behind a man. They tell her, saying: 'You have grown up, you have work [i.e. intercourse] with a man.'
>
> QUESTION: *Kipetule?*
>
> AGOMBWIKE: *Kipetule* is very old. It's to bless her and say: 'You have grown up. When you go to your husband it will not be painful. Have intercourse.' If the woman is no longer a virgin they do not speak of it. They say she knows already, she has learnt on the veld.

834 *Kipetule*, like *undumila*, is a word not used in mixed company. Once Kasitile whispered, when inquiry had been made, unwittingly, before other people: 'No, Mwaipaja (G. W.), there are children present, and my senior, that is bad. But when there are only cross-cousins (*batani*), then . . .' So the conversation changed.

881 585 783 The washing at the stream is a final purification. Lyandileko said:

> We give the bride brass body-rings because she was not wearing good things (*inunu*), she was filthy during the puberty ritual. We wash her and put on body-rings and a cloth, and she stands in the winnowing basket, because now she must not step on dirt (*ububibi*).

881 585 The earth, it will be remembered, is associated with faeces, corpses, and the shades. Then comes the triumphal return to her father's house, the girl carried high, and the women dancing. 'Crying "*Nisya*" and carrying the girl, on return from bathing, is for display.' Lyandileko, asked the reason for throwing millet in the winnowing basket, replied:

> It's to say it [the food, i.e. the meat of the bull of puberty] is ours. We examine the girl at the river. If she is rubbish (*lenga lindu*) we do not rejoice. The mothers of the girl give gifts (*ukubonola*). It's a rejoicing because it's ours, it's ours, the girl is virgin.

Nisya, the word the women repeat as they carry and dance with the bride on the return from the stream, was interpreted by Angombwike as meaning: 'Put me down.'[2] 'It is traditional and

[1] Mwakionde denied this, *vide infra*, p. 109.

[2] *Ukuniya*: to put down behind (as opposed to in front).

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means: Since you have carried me, put me down, mother, I am a woman,' i.e. this is the symbolic ending of childhood.

Mwakwelebeja's wife interpreted stepping into the winnowing basket as being 'in order that she may cook well for her husband and serve his food nicely'. Kasitile, when asked about it, replied:

> They honour the fearful ones (*abipasya*) themselves, saying: 'This is your child, she is Kyala, we are performing the ritual for her.' If they honour an *umwipasya* on the ground Kyala is startled, the child runs mad, she is ill. . . . In these customs we come together to teach the child. Kyala said: 'Shake the winnowing basket for a daughter and say: "We have sent you to your husband; if we hear of cases at your husband's you are no child of ours." ' The mothers of the village instruct the girl. She ought to look towards her mothers-in-law (as they do so) and, if she does not, they beat her again, saying: 'Those are your mothers there, we are not relatives, look to them over there.'

Mwakionde, a doctor, interpreted most of the events in the same way. Asked about the cloth hung over the bride's buttocks, he replied:

> It is because during the puberty ritual she does not wear iron [i.e. metal] or a good bark-cloth. . . . Then the cloth comes from the husband [*sic.*] with the three body-rings. It is a way of saying: 'She's my wife.' They carry her and say: *Nisya.*
>
> QUESTION: Why?
>
> MWAKIONDE: Because she has grown up. Until now she was a child. A while ago we bore and begot her, now she has grown up herself and is honoured, she herself begins to bear a child. It is to finish and say: 'Go to your husband and bear your own children.' Her mothers and the women of her father's village throw millet and maize and pumpkin-seeds. It is a rejoicing. Our child has flourished, she has grown up. They give the seed to her mother-in-law, the mother of the groom, and she takes it away.
>
> QUESTION: Is it not a ritual?
>
> MWAKIONDE: No, it is only a rejoicing.

Mwaihojo's daughter, asked why millet was thrown into the basket, replied simply: 'It is shaken, we are rejoicing greatly,' and indeed the basket is shaken in time to the dance, almost like a tambourine.

The theme of rejoicing recurs again and again in the course of the ritual. At the 'putting her in' her mothers dance with her on their shoulders 'to honour her because my child has grown up';

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881 585 her mother-in-law covers her head with a red cloth 'for display'. 'We are rejoicing because our child has grown up,' and she too takes her on her shoulders and dances with her. When the 'husbands' come to dance the stamping dance: 'It too is a rejoicing. It shows I have married a wife now.' All through there is rejoicing over the fine food, and the celebration and feasting is primarily among the women. The culmination comes when the girl is publicly shown to be a virgin and the mothers can claim the bull crying in exultation: 'It's ours, it's ours.'

881 585 184 798 An interesting sidelight on the attitude of girls towards the ritual came from a young man, a Christian, who was betrothed to a pagan girl and had forbidden her to go through the ritual. He said:

> Once my wife, when she had reached puberty, asked me why I objected to her undergoing the puberty ritual. I said it was forbidden for us Christians to participate in it, and I asked her if she wished to do so. She said 'Yes', and I asked why. She said: 'When the ritual is performed for us we are famed. People tell each other that so-and-so's daughter has grown up and people from far away come to sing songs, so we become very well known. See, now I have grown up, but no one sees that I have done so. Only you know.' Then I said: 'We Christians also have the custom of celebrating growing up at the handing over of marriage-cattle to the father (*ukukwa*). We do not hand over cattle when girls are still small, so everyone sees that a girl has grown up when we do so.' She agreed and said: 'I, also, have seen a little of the handing over of cattle among Christians.'

In fact, the *ukukwa* is the occasion for a great feast among Christians to which many young men and girls come to sing and dance.

881 585 The giving of presents to the bride by her father and his contemporaries is interpreted as part of the rejoicing.

431 To give presents (*ukubonola*) is to rejoice. It's an occasion for display and rejoicing, because the girl has grown up. The father gives her a present because he rejoices that she has grown up. He says to her: 'Congratulations, you have grown up, you are going away to your husband, you are going away to gain a child!'

881 585 602 During the period of seclusion the girl's father is spoken of as her father-in-law (*unkamwana*). She must *ukutila* (respect and avoid) him:

> Because he is her father who begot her. She thinks: 'I must respect

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my father-in-law, father.'[1] She says: 'I have grown up finally, I am a woman.' 'As I have grown up, I am a daughter-in-law (*unkamwana*).' 'If a girl looks at her father (during the ritual) she is proud (*namatingo*).' 'She used to be beaten if she looked at her father's friends. She is proud if she does. Her mothers will beat her.' She also fears ridicule—'We *ukutila* because we laugh at one another'—and mystical sanctions. 'If she does not *ukutila* (her father) she gets thin and brown. Since she has grown up she must avoid people.' 'She would become light in colour if she did not *ukutila* during the ritual.' 'She will grow thin and her body will be brown instead of black. We think that ugly.'

Mwandisi (the old blind chief), asked why a bride should *ukutila* her father, replied:

She avoids him and he gives her a gift to break the taboo. During puberty it is taboo. Kyala has created us so. Because if her father looks at her she grows thin, those below [i.e. the shades] are angry.

QUESTION: And those above?

MWANDISI: Yes! Do they not injure them? Do they not give those who throw out the litter a bull that they may eat?

Mwakionde (the doctor), asked the same question, replied:

It is because of the in-law relationship (*ubukamwana*). If I, the father, look at her she will grow thin and waste away, but at the beer we give her gifts of bark-cloth to break the taboo and say: 'You have come out (*usokile*). You have come out, my child. I am sorry about the fire, I am sorry.' Then she looks at us. She avoids me, the father, and my younger brothers and my fellows in the age-village who are all, according to our custom, her fathers.

Ukutila of her mother-in-law (shielding her face with a mat or skin) was interpreted by Mwakionde in this way:

It is on account of the dignity of her mother-in-law who says: 'She is my child, see, she respects and avoids me, saying: "She bore my husband." I am her superior. She acknowledges my dignity. She is wise, she respects me, her mother.'

Everyone was agreed that 'the bull of puberty' (*ingambako jabusungu*) is both a sacrifice to the shades, who are asked to bless the girl and make her fertile, and a feast for the mothers and that, strictly, it is only brought if the girl is virgin. 'We throw the *ija mnapa* meat in the banana grove and put a stone on top of it so that those below may eat, and we pray that the girl may bear a

[1] Some aspects of father-in-law and daughter-in-law avoidance are discussed in *Good Company*, pp. 83–6.

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585 881 child at her husband's.' Neglect to kill the bull may result in sterility. Mwaseba, a middle-aged man, said:

If the officiants, the mothers of the girl, have not eaten, and the father also, the girl will not bear a child, these people are angry and the shades are angry, they (the shades) help them (the living). And if you do not perform the other customs of the litter the shades are angry, the fathers and the mothers. They say: 'What! Have you not treated the child?'

Mwakionde, the doctor, explained:

[843] When a woman conceives and has a miscarriage, it is *mindu*, the shades are angry. Perhaps if we have not killed the bull of puberty we buy one. The shades are angry, saying: 'Why have we not received a libation of blood poured on the ground for our grandchild? They have done wrong towards us, we who created them.' The girl does not bear a child because pouring out the blood of a beast (bull or cow) is to pray (*ukona ililopa lya nombe ko kwiputa*).

Mwakobela, our neighbour, said:

If we have not eaten the bull of puberty, they bewitch us (*bikundoga*), the child does not bear a child. Our fellows in the lineage bewitch us, they say: 'We have not eaten the puberty meat.' Then, later on, the husband brings the bull and we eat, and the *ija mmapa* meat we throw in the banana grove, and we pray and pray and the girl conceives.

842 775 The fertility of the girl is believed to depend upon driving away the shade of her father's lineage from her body. We have already quoted (p. 98) the prayer: 'Here is the meat! I have eaten the food of others, *come out a little*, may she bear a child at her husband's.' Mwaisilage explained this conception:

Those of old said: 'We drive away Kyala and the shades, may she bear at her husband's.' She moves to others, to a different lineage. May that lineage rise up from the dead (*kisyukege ikikolo kila*). If we do not treat the girl she will not bear a child at her husband's.

To understand this it is necessary to understand the Nyakyusa theory of conception. It is held that sexual desire in both men and women comes from Kyala and the shades, and without their support a man is impotent, a woman barren. Kasitile was quite explicit on the matter:

Kyala is in the belly. He causes the blood of a woman which forms a child to flow and the blood of the man also. We say that Kyala is in the belly; he watches over us at the conception of a child. But our fathers,

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841 QUESTION: And menses?
775 MWANDISI: When the shades are angry a woman is constantly menstruating and does not bear a child; if they are not angry she conceives.

833 And on another occasion he said:
842
775 Lust comes from the shades; if they are angry with you you are impotent; you cannot beget a child.

His wife added: 'My husband says in his heart: "Let me go to my wife." It is the shade that makes him.'

One informant after another mentioned *both* Kyala (or Lwembe) *and* the shades as being present in intercourse. Mwakionde, after [843] talking of miscarriages being due to the anger of the shades, went on:

Kyala has created the bowel of desire. If a man is impotent we say Kyala has not given him breath to beget a child.

KAKUJU: If my child runs off with a man, whether a stranger or her husband, before she has reached puberty and I continue angry, if Kyala has helped me she does not bear a child. Then it is said 'her father was angry'. They come to me bringing the remaining marriage-cattle and I pray and she bears a child.

QUESTION: If the husband asked for her properly and deflowered her before puberty?

KAKUJU: There is no case, it was all right, even long ago. I said: 'Finish paying the cattle.' Perhaps he begged me, saying: 'I am poor, Father,' and I was satisfied.

842 No pagan questions the power of the shades over fertility, and
775 this power is believed to be exercised by the mother's lineage, as well as that of the father. Angombwike, the Christian, said:

● [881] The pagans fear that if they do not perform the puberty ritual when a girl reaches puberty, she will dry up. The blood will not come again even though she is not pregnant. Then, if her periods do not come for two or three months, like this, she will never bear a child. They say the shades are angry and have bound her fertility. And if she does not reach puberty at all, if menstruation does not begin, her father prays in the banana grove, saying: 'You, fathers, what are you angry about?' And if the girl's mother's brother is angry on account of cattle—perhaps her father has not given marriage-cattle properly for her mother—he, the mother's brother, binds a wisp of the litter (*ulufumbo*) from her puberty ritual in the loft, then the girl will not bear a child. Inquiry is made of a diviner who says: 'The mother's brother has bound her.' The father takes a cow to him and says: 'I am sorry, I have done wrong, I

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have thought of it now, this is the cow.' Then, in the evening, the mother's brother blows out water in the banana grove and prays much to the fathers. And when he has prayed he says: 'Send the girl to a doctor to drink medicine.' Then the girl bears a child. The pagans say of us Christians when we have children without performing the ritual: 'You have a medicine, you are baptized with a medicine.'

Mwakobela confirmed that the mother's brother, like the father, may prevent a girl bearing a child.

Yes, it is so, if I do not give marriage-cattle for my wife our child will not bear. We go to divine and the oracle catches hold of my wife saying that the fathers are angry. We ask what they are angry about, and the answer is 'cattle'. Then I, the father of the girl, go with a cow and leave it and return. My wife and daughter remain there. They pray and pray and the girl conceives.

It is clear, therefore, that the shades are present in intercourse and control conception. At marriage the shade of her father must 'move aside a little' so that the bride may conceive, and she herself becomes dangerous to her mother (and in a lesser degree to her father) because she has mingled her blood with that of another lineage. Mingling the blood of different lineages is dangerous and a bride can safely meet her mother only after performing a ritual in which her parents, as well as herself, become 'one flesh' with her husband. 'When a bride brings a hen and millet to her mother it is to say: "Mother, I have wiped my husband's genitals, I have grown up."' All our informants were agreed that this *ilibalaga* or *ilibuko* (both words are used) is to safeguard the mother's health, particularly to prevent her suffering from diarrhœa. Mwandisi's statement was clear:

In the puberty ritual, when a bride has come from her husband, having lain with him, she catches hold of a little millet and a fowl without washing herself and carries them to her mother. The mother eats it with the fowl that her belly may be firm. If the daughter does not bring these things, then, when she drinks from the same calabash as her mother, she oversteps her mother, who has diarrhœa. Yes, the illness comes from the shades because she has come hot from the bed. . . . This diarrhœa comes from the belly when those below are angry and those above also. They say: 'The mother has overstepped the child' or 'The child has overstepped the mother'. If a girl has reached puberty we, the parents, do not come together until she has gone to her husband and lain with him. If we have intercourse we

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881 585 783 753 834 overstep our child, she will be barren and not bear children, but when she has lain with her husband then we two lie together again.

Kasitile identified the hen with the body of the girl, the millet with the seed of her husband, and a daughter going to the back of her mother's hut (*kosofu*), or drinking out of the common calabash, as meeting with her mother.

> If she does this before she has brought a fowl she soils her mother. Her mother develops diarrhœa. That is getting rid of the dirt (*kokususya ubunyali*). . . . The mother's diarrhœa is like that from adultery. If my wife lies with a man in the bush, and I lie with her also, she soils the food which I eat with her, it is dirty, and I have diarrhœa, it is to get rid of the filth. . . . Yes, even though we do not lie together, I get a little diarrhœa, the filth of my wife.
>
> QUESTION: Is the *ilibalaga* to drive away the shade again?
>
> KASITILE: No, it is something else. It is to save the mother that she may not have diarrhœa and may not become weak.

881 585 The explanation given of the Kukwe *ilibuko* rite makes clear that it is a symbolic mingling of 'the blood' of son-in-law and mother-in-law, which makes contact between them (through the bride) safe.

881 585 753 Failure to bring the *ilibalaga* is thought sometimes to result in very serious illness. One of the wives of our neighbour, Mwakôbela, was delirious. We asked what the cause was. He replied:

> Her daughter reached puberty and went to her husband, but refused to drink with her mother. She just came and took water in the calabash cup, she brought nothing from her husband. . . . If the husband is poor a girl brings a fowl for drinking with her mother. . . . The divination said: 'It's the girl.'
>
> QUESTION: Why did she not bring a hen from her husband?
>
> MWAKOBELA: He is not a man of wisdom, he's very harsh, and a fool.

881 585 606 After the *ilibalaga* has been eaten by her parents a bride is no longer dangerous to them, and she, fortified by the various treatments with *undumila* and *ikipiki* medicines, no longer fears the 'heavy ones'. The critical periods of first menstruation and first intercourse are past. But the rule of avoidance between her and her father-in-law (and those identified with him) continues through life and is directly associated by the Nyakyusa with the

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danger of incest. They account for the rule by a myth which tells how a certain chief looked on his son's wife and saw that she was beautiful and took her, and men were shocked, and forbade a father-in-law and daughter-in-law ever to see one another again. And this taboo, they say, is the reason why fathers and sons must live in separate villages. To avoid (*ukutila*) is 'to fear, to show respect'. Avoidance occurs between women in a limited degree—a girl shows respect to her father's sister, a daughter-in-law to her mother-in-law and her husband's father's sister by not looking at them directly or touching their backs; but these women are in some measure identified with father and father-in-law, and the taboos are most stringent regarding things or actions which are associated with sexual activity. The behaviour of Nyakyusa women suggests very strongly that the fundamental idea in *ukutila* is avoidance of incest.[1] Avoidance between father-in-law and daughter-in-law is the primary rule of good manners and morals in domestic relations, and is constantly expressed in everyday activities.

Besides being a celebration of the change from childhood to womanhood, and of movement from the lineage of her father to that of her husband, the puberty—marriage ritual includes a legal contract. Either at the betrothal, or when the bulk of the marriage-cattle are handed over, the groom's go-between thrusts a spear into the earth of the swept courtyard and there, publicly, before her kinsfolk and neighbours, the bride must pluck it out and hand it to her father, in token of her consent to the marriage. 'It means: "With this spear you may slay me if I run away from my husband." And her father keeps the spear and may kill her if she does—some fathers did so in the old days.'

After taking the spear the father plucks a banana leaf and hands his daughter the mid-rib with which she strikes one of the cows brought by her husband, and all the women of the homestead acclaim her. Thus her acceptance of the marriage is demonstrated. And each time an instalment of the marriage-cattle is handed over, the go-between of her father and the go-between of the husband must both be present as witnesses; and they notify their sons of the contracts they have so witnessed so that the sons may give evidence after the death of their fathers if necessary.

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 83-6, 106, 123, 180-2; 'Nyakyusa Kinship' in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, edited by A. R. Radcliffe-Brown and Daryll Forde, p. 127-8.

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2. IN KUKWE COUNTRY

(a) *The events*

585 The puberty and marriage ritual performed by the Kukwe
581 differs in detail from that performed by the Nyakyusa proper, but
184 the main elements—the seclusion of the bride and avoidance of her fathers and brothers, the laying of a ritual litter, the meeting of maids and young men on the litter, the avoidance of water, the treatment with *ikipiki* medicine, shaving and ceremonial purification, the instruction, the celebration of maturity and virginity by the exchange of feasts between the bride's parents and those of the groom, the slaughter of the bull of virginity provided by her husband, and the taking of a fowl to her mother after first intercourse —all these recur. And the overt purpose of the ritual is again that the girl may be fertile, and healthy in mind and body. The main differences are in the symbols used for intercourse and purification, and in the location of the rites. Among the Nyakyusa proper most of the ritual is performed at the bride's home, whereas among the Kukwe most of it is performed at the groom's home.

585 When a Kukwe girl first menstruates her father sends his go-
881 between in the marriage (*umfuya*) to inform her husband that she has grown up. If she has been visiting her husband, and is at his house when the first period begins, she runs home to her father's, and the formal message is despatched to her husband. He sends back a hen with the message: 'Thank you, you have nourished my wife,' and some time later sends a second hen by his go-between summoning her to come and wash. A party of two or three 'mothers' (her own mother does not go) and ten or a dozen maids takes her to her husband's, and there (if she is a senior wife) she washes with him in water mixed with powdered *ikipiki* medicine. The officiant pours the water which the husband catches in his hands, and the wife holds her hands below his. Then they kindle fire together by friction (*ukupepa ukupanda*), husband and wife both twirling the stick (his hands are again above hers) and the officiant holding the horizontal trough. On the fire they have kindled porridge is cooked, which they eat together. A junior wife washes and kindles fire and eats porridge, not with her husband, but with his younger brother.

After the ritual meal 'mothers-in-law' cut banana leaves and spread the litter for the bride at their homestead, not at her father's. The officiant sprinkles powdered medicine over the floor on one side of the hut and makes two girls lie down with the bride

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between them. These two remain with the bride all through the period of seclusion, never leaving her, but the other maids may come and go if called away to perform other duties.

From the onset of menstruation until the ritual washing a girl may neither cross a stream nor wash; after it she crosses streams and washes her hands and feet, but does not yet bathe her whole body. She sleeps on the litter with her companions for about a month and 'by day and by night the young men sing songs with the girls. . . . The play in the puberty hut resembles adultery—we call it love-making (*ukuganiya*).' 'The groom visits his bride on the litter.' 'Gifts of beer and firewood are brought by the bride's mothers (*ukusumbulela*) and, after her second period has passed, the rite of *ukusuya* (bringing out) is performed.'

The litter is swept out and burnt. Bride and groom are shaved and go separately to bathe. 'The women carry the girl and the man's fellows carry him.' The girl is examined to prove her virginity and the women return with her rejoicing, and make her and her husband run in and out of the doorway of a hut over which they pour water. Then follows the admonition.

At the *ukusuya* (bringing out) rite the officiants drink a special brewing of beer made in the following fashion: the chief officiant puts a little millet, mixed with powdered medicine, into a flat winnowing basket, makes the bride stand in it and, loosening her bark-cloth soiled by first menstruation, lets it fall into the millet.[1] Then she shreds and burns it, lest an enemy, wishing to prevent the bride conceiving, should get hold of it. The bride's fresh bark-cloth is sprinkled with medicines to make her 'heavy', the ashes of the old one are treated with medicines to ensure her fertility, and the millet is put to soak and brewed into beer in the hut in which she lies secluded on the litter.

We saw the Kukwe *ukusuya* rite performed only once. The girl, a daughter of a chief, was not yet married or betrothed, so there was no groom to play his part, and the whole ritual was carried out in her father's homestead, her own mother going through it with her. She herself appeared most reluctant, and there were various modifications due to the pressure of new ideas. We quote the account to show the manner of washing, and of entering and leaving the hut—rites which were described in detail by a number of informants, and which are characteristic of the Kukwe ritual cycle.

[1] It was not made clear by Kukwe informants exactly when this happened.

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Record of M. W., 13 September 1936

●691 I arrived at nine o'clock in the morning to find Nyungu, the elderly
771 wife of the chief's senior brother, who acts as officiant in all the rituals for the chief's family, grinding and cooking *ingombo* together with a powdered medicine and red pigment, to make an ointment. I asked the purpose of the medicine. She replied: 'It's *dajabi* that she may be heavy, that she may bear children and not be barren.'

273 Some of the chief's wives gave me beer—ordinary beer. They them-
709 selves were drinking from a pot which had stood in the inner room of the house (*kanyi*) and to which medicine had been added. They explained that it might be drunk only by themselves, the chief's wives. A strange woman, a Penja, came along and, though warned that this pot was
[71] not for her, insisted on drinking some of it. She explained how Penja ritual differed from that of the Kukwe—they kill sheep for the puberty ritual. Usually this beer stands to brew in the enclosure but 'on the fire'.

98 The women were preparing a dish of beans and bananas cooked together, and when it was ready a little was given to the officiant, some was put aside for the girl (*mwanje*),[1] and the remains were offered to the guests. One of the cooks threw away the central stem of the head of bananas used, but was told by the officiant to fetch it back, as all the rubbish must be cleared away together at the end of the rite.

After midday the officiant shaved some hair from the girl's armpits and the back of her neck, and then she shaved the mother completely. I asked why the girl was not shaved completely and was told: 'The fellows would laugh at her if she had no hair.' The officiant prepared four banana leaves, stripping each off on one side of the mid-rib and shredding the other half so as to make a rough fringe. Standing with her back to the girl, she touched herself over the genitals, breasts, and forehead, then handed the leaf back over her head, telling the girl to fasten it round her waist. She repeated the performance with the second leaf, telling the girl to fasten it round her neck. The girl complied with the first leaf but refused the second, saying: 'I have a cloth,' and she pulled her brown cloth round her shoulders. The officiant followed the same procedure with the girl's mother, who fastened both leaves round herself. Then one of the chief's wives took the mother on her shoulders and carried her round the corner of the house. The bride followed on foot, and three other wives of the chief, singing:

Eyamale
Eyatile
Eyamalee
Eyatile

[21] [1] Usually we have translated *mwanje* by 'bride', but in this case she was not betrothed: cf. footnote 2, p. 79.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1937 F'317 Ngombe F'317
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V.L.C.

The words 'odor to the crisis of the mother in labour'—'they symbolize the adolescence of the bride and the toil of the mother in labour.'

They went together to the stream, the girl's mother walking after they were past the homesteads. The girl and her mother sat down on the bed of the stream, facing down-stream. The other women made them hold out their hands, and between each finger and toe, and behind each ear, they placed a small pebble. Flowers and grass, twisted together, were placed on their heads, with stones on top. Then both were made to lie down in the water. The girl was pushed down and dipped seven times. She protested a little and was told: 'You are proud.' The women and girls on the bank laughed. She was told to take off her clothes and wash herself and, looking rather embarrassed, she went a little way up-stream into the shelter of some bushes. The women still said she was shy of me. Her mother took off her cloth and washed it, and all the chief's wives present, a younger sister of the mumps, and another little girl did so also. The mumps dipped on a fresh dry cloth, her mother a fresh bark-cloth, and each was given a little bunch of ferns and flowers to carry. One woman filled a small calabash with water and the party returned to the mother's house. Mother and daughter were told by the officiant to throw their flowers on to the roof of the hut just above the doorway; she herself poured some of the water brought from the stream on to the thatch and made the girl enter the doorway as the water dripped down. Again she poured water and made the girl come out. The rite was repeated for the mother. Then the officiant took the red ointment she had prepared with medicine, and touched herself with it on the left ear, the left knee, the navel, the left temple, and left elbow. She touched the girl with it in the same places, smeared it on her legs, arms, shoulders, and head, and did the same for the mother, and for the small sister who had washed.

Next she cleared away the banana skins and bean-shells left by the women who had cooked earlier and, along with this refuse, the bunch of bark-cloth scrap taken off the girl when she washed. There was no hiss (*ulyombo*), though the women said it was usual for there to be one. Then the girl ate some of the cooked beans, bean, and mash of bean and banana prepared, and drank some of the medicated beer with her mother, and the ceremonial rite was at an end.

Usually, we were told, the mothers sing: 'Put me down, Mother, put me down,' as they carry the little back from the stream after examining her, and throw gifts of grain into a winnowing basket, as they do in Safwa, but there was no such rejoicing for this girl. It seemed likely, from the rumors omitted, that she was known not to be a virgin, but we had no proof of this. When the mumps is betrothed, her husband also throws out maize, is car-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1937 F317 Ngombe F317
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Kukwe

...sted to the stream, runs in and out under the dripping water, is anointed with red ointment, draws the mark of beans and bananas, and drinks medicated beer with her from the same calabash. In the old days it was taken for either bride or groom to set foot to the ground on their way to the stream.

For a senior wife, the mother-in-law smells breath-bricks with powdered medicine, and sets them up in the groom's hut. A mother goes through the ritual with her eldest daughter if the daughter is her first-born, or with her senior daughter-in-law if her eldest child is a boy. 'If they do not do this they go mad.'

As in Selya, an admonition of the bride by her 'mothers', in the presence of her in-laws, concludes the full 'bringing out' ritual. We never heard it in Kukwe country, but the points mentioned by informants were similar to those emphasized in Selya. Kajinga, Perekwe's second wife, summed up the teaching thus:

Obey your husband when he calls you. Fetch water and wood. Don't say: 'Time for me fetch firewood' if your husband wants you to do something else. Do what your husband says first, then to-morrow go for wood. It is forbidden to refuse when your husband wants to sleep with you. In the morning get up and wash. Wash first, then light the fire and give your husband food. Don't say: 'There isn't any food.'

Next day, on her return home, the bride is given presents by the people of her home village (*ubugwe*), her father making the first gift. The groom brings the bull of puberty on which all the 'mothers' feast, but the meat from the top of the right foreleg (*ijanga*) is reserved for the bride's own parents who sing as they eat it:

Kyatile, Kyatile, Kyatipa

Some days later a party of 'mothers' takes her formally to her husband's house (*ukumbida*) with gifts of beer and food and firewood, and are feasted by the groom's people and given chickens and shillings.

When she is finally living with her husband, before she can visit or greet her parents, the bride must put milk and a fowl (some say a live fowl, others a cooked one) under her bed at night. After having had intercourse with her husband she takes the fowl and milk and gives them to her parents with the gift of intercourse still on her. This is called the *ilibala*. If she does not do this her mother will fall ill and have diarrhoea.' 'When they take the food

2: Wilson E-5 (1936-1938)1937 F917 Ngonde F917
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(from under the bed) in the morning it has the filth of intercourse on it, then the father and mother should eat it. If this is not done they will fall ill with diarrhoea. If the hen is taken alive some eat it and others do not.

After discussing this rite Mwanakombo went on:

You know, also, that when a girl has gone through the puberty ritual at her husband's she must not take firewood from her mother's culture (hanjale) until she is obviously pregnant. Before then, while she is lying with her husband, she must not. We say: 'How can you take your mother's [illegible] while you are sleeping with [illegible]?' It is just the same whether the mother is old or young. If the bride goes through the ritual without sleeping with her husband that is all right; it is when she begins to sleep with him that she begins to avoid her mother's hut. At that time I, the father, may meet her mother and sleep with her, but with some interruption. I must not make her pregnant. The daughter must begin. As soon as she is pregnant then we parents can begin to conceive a child again. If we do so before our daughter, then she will never bear a child at all, and others will say: 'How could you contemn your daughter?'

Avoidance between father-in-law and daughter-in-law is observed as in Selya, but is slightly less strict.

(3) *The inner purpose and symbolism*

As has already been indicated, the symbolism of the Kukwe ritual of puberty is similar to that of Selya. The same actions are interpreted in exactly the same way and, where actions differ somewhat, they are still interpreted as expressing the same general conceptions. For example, the Kukwe bride and groom make five cupsfuls by division and eat porridge cooked on it, whereas a bride in Selya eats beestings with powdered medicine, but both actions are symbols of sexual intercourse. Both in Selya and in Kukwe country the bride is purified and, as part of the process of purification, the shade of her father's lineage is driven from her body; but only among the Kukwe is this symbolized by sitting in a running stream and allowing the water to wash away pebbles from between her fingers and toes.

That there may be no doubt about the interpretation of the Kukwe ritual we again quote a number of statements by Nyakyusa informants. These refer specifically to the Kukwe form of the puberty ritual.

Chief Fundikwa's wives, discussing the ritual together, were em-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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585 phatic that 'if the bride does not wash with powdered medicine
●881 she will go mad and she will bury children'.

Syungu, the officiant for all the rituals in Porokoto's lineage, said:

[158] If a girl goes mad, we say, if we have not treated her: 'We neglected the ritual, let us treat her.' She runs about aimlessly and makes bundles of filth. But if we have treated her we say: 'Perhaps Kyala has gone away from me. See! Nothing has been omitted, we have treated her.' And if she does not bear a child at her husband's her in-laws say to her: 'Did your father and mother not treat you?'

[753] Mungabalwa (a middle-aged pagan): It is said that if she eats food with her fellows who sleep with their husbands they will harm (overstep) her, and she has diarrhoea. When she has been given powdered medicine, then she eats with them. . . . To lie on powdered medicine which has been sprinkled on the ground is to give the bride weight (*ubuzito*), because if it is not done those who are with their husbands will overstep her and she will have diarrhoea.

[177] Porokoto's Wives: In the old days we put medicine in her porridge so that she would not run away from her husband . . . not now. It's European times now.

[882] Question: In Selya it is said that if she is not given powdered medicine she will be proud.

Wives: Yes, here too. And if the girl is proud we beat her.

Mungabalwa: Washing and catching in her hands the water that falls from her husband's hands has two meanings. In some families the husband and wife wash separately, in others they wash together. In either case the first meaning is present, in the second both meanings.

[753] It is said that when someone has not washed in the puberty ritual his or her children will die, for that water (with which he neglected to wash) will enter the child's stomach and kill it. The water is in the child's stomach but its symptoms are those of diarrhoea. The middle girl catching water in her hands teaches us that the woman will receive

[833] everything. The man is like the upper grindstone, the woman like the nether grindstone (we speak of intercourse), which means that the women receives the semen which comes from the man.

Making fire by friction is a symbol of procreation.[1] If the fire does not kindle we say the couple are sterile. Two fire-sticks are used, one is the man the other the woman, and the fire is the child. The sawdust made by the rubbing is the semen.

Kajimoa: If the fire does not come the man is sterile and the girl will quarrel with her husband and perhaps run away. It does not mean she will be barren with other men.

[1] *Ukupyapya*: to make fire by friction; *ukwipyapya*: to manufacture.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1937 F3617 Ngonde F3617
Nyakyusa
Kukuc

Mwasumwe: The bride does not even water for it is said that the blood which began to flow when she reached puberty will not dry on her body if she does.

To sleep on the litter and to refuse to sleep on sleeping-mats is a sign of childhood (for during childhood girls do not think much about cleanliness, but are dirty); it means that they leave behind them (literally 'come out from') childish things. The litter is burnt because it has not been burnt the children take bits of it to make a fire and cook food, then, when they have eaten that food, their bodies are sick. To say the body becomes unhealthily fat (*ukujagala*). Food is collected for a bride because if, later, a woman, who has not had food collected for her, does find collected for another bride going through the puberty ritual, she will fall sick and her body will grow unhealthily fat. Bringing food for the *akambalile* and giving gifts at the *ukugwa* are to congratulate the bride because she has grown up, she is now an adult.

K.: The wearing of banana leaves [at the bringing out] is a sign of fertility. The ritual is finished, the girl is someone's wife now. . . . The mountain represents the penis, the cover becomes the clitoris.

Sitting in a stream and letting water carry away pebbles placed between fingers and toes is a symbol of purification and separation from the shade. The first element—purification—was mentioned by most informants: 'The rite means that the dirt is finished,' said Mwakolo's wife; but the more self-conscious identified 'dirt' with the shade. Mwasumwe made the matter quite clear. When asked why pebbles were placed in the clefts of fingers and toes, he replied: 'Kyala, when he created men, said: "At death throw it away, it is the shade, it is the body."'

Question: Is the puberty ritual?

Mwasumwe: It is to say that the shade has troubled over the child, for he created blood we threw him away. May the shade go with that stream, then may she bear children; if he does not go, if you do not wear the girl, then Kyala broods over her and she does not bear children.

Question: Why does she avoid her father at this time?

Mwasumwe: Because I, the father, and her mother, perform the ritual for our child. Our shade has entered into her, has troubled over us, therefore we do not come together on the mat until we have finished wearing our child; when we have finished, and have entered, then we do what we will on the mat. If I were to lie with my wife [during the ritual] she refuses, saying: 'Our child has not yet finished, she is still undergoing the puberty ritual.' But if she agrees and we come together, then our child will never bear. When we have finished the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1937 F3017 Ngonde F3017
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Lukwa

[illegible] we had finished the
[illegible] ritual I come together with my wife again, but if our child is unmarried
[illegible] it is taboo to procreate a child, we practise coitus interruptus, the semen
[illegible] falls on the mat. . . . This is until the girl goes to her husband, until she
is married. If my wife wears a bark-cloth I say to her during our
daughter's puberty ritual: 'Arrange your bark-cloth carefully for I,
the man, desire you, I shall catch hold of you and we will cause the
shade to make our child known.' When she has gone to her husband
we say our shade has finished, he has gone away in the water. Our
child has gone to another shade. Yes, she also has intercourse with her
husband at his home, but that does not matter, I have intercourse with
my wife.

[illegible] He was emphatic that the parents begin full intercourse as soon
as the girl goes to her husband, it is not necessary to wait for her
to become pregnant.

[illegible] Question: What do the spirits do in intercourse?
[illegible] Mwanisumo: The shade causes my penis to stand up and says: 'Go
to the woman, there.' And also the woman's shade says: 'Your hus-
band come into you.' It is the shades which cause desire, then
we have intercourse, the shades meet together, hers—the woman's—
and mine. If I do not go to my wife the shade says: 'Why, what's
wrong with my place? Are there thorns? Why do you not come?' They
breed over (*kukwanila*) us both, both me and my wife.

Question: What do they want?

Mwanisumo: They want to create a child.

[illegible] Question: Why then do men desire masturbation and sodomy? [At
[illegible] first when I asked this he said: 'No, the shade is a woman,' but then he
[illegible] corrected himself].

Mwanisumo: It is the shade which causes this desire, we have it
within. A youth masturbates, the semen falls on the ground—perhaps
two youths, it's also the shade. And a woman also masturbates. . .

[illegible] Question: You perform the rituals for many reasons?

[illegible] Mwanisumo: Yes, if we do not perform the rituals the shade breeds
on us and we do not bear children. Perhaps he breeds on the crops,
and they do not grow well for people, perhaps we run mad.

On another occasion Mwanisumo said:

[illegible] The shade is in the heart. It is the shade which desires to go to a
[illegible] woman, which causes us men to have erections and excites desire in
women. If you have not got the shade you are impotent, you do not go
to women. We say: 'The shade has breeded over this man, why do
they not cause him to go to women?' He just looks at women. Then the
shade comes up to the belly and says: 'Hai!' It comes up and the man
has intercourse with a woman. If it has breeded over him, it does not

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukuc

come him, it does not wish to come out. And although the faeces are firm they are the corpse. Because we bury a corpse underground, and faeces also go underground to the shades. They disappear by night, that is the shade. If someone recovers faeces and finds it in the grass we say: 'The shade has caught hold of him.'

QUESTION: Are faeces associated with sexual intercourse?

MWAKASUMBA: Yes, the shade does both things, he causes diarrhoea and sexual intercourse. If you defaecate firm stools that is not the shade, that is the food we eat, but watery diarrhoea which troubles you repeatedly at night—that is the shade. If you have diarrhoea for three days people say: 'The shades have hammered you' or 'The shade has caught hold of you.'

QUESTION: Malowa?

MWAKASUMBA: That is the shade because it says: 'Since you have me in your belly, and they have not treated you, I cause this—these faeces are the corpse. A madman defaecates and catches hold of his faeces, perhaps he eats them, perhaps he binds it up in the grass and catches hold of it. It is the corpse.'

Kakuse, the doctor, also interpreted the puberty ritual as being, in one aspect, the transference of a girl from her father's group to her husband's and, like Kasitile and Mwasalomba, he identified sexual desire and potency with the shades. He said:

At puberty a girl has left her father's and has gone to others; if she dies he to whom she has gone buries her.

QUESTION: Whose does the blood of a woman come from?

KAKUSE: If the girl is unmarried, from her shades; they create her blood, but in the ritual we treat her so that she moves to my place, she comes to my shades; the blood of a married woman is created by my shades and hers together. *And the 'blood' of a man [i.e. semen] also comes from the shades.*

QUESTION: Do the shades reveal themselves at birth?

KAKUSE: Yes, because if I am angry or my father is angry I do not beget a child, but when he has prayed I do so. If I am angry with the woman and she has caught hold of me and injured me, then we do not have a child. The ordeal (*umuaji*) convicts the woman. She goes to her father who prays. Then we have a child.

QUESTION: Whose does the power to bear and beget children come from?

KAKUSE: From the shades, you have the shades in your belly. If they are not there you are all like women in the house, you cannot have an erection, but when the shades work, you have an erection.

QUESTION: Whose shades are present at intercourse?

KAKUSE: Mine, the man's and the woman's, we both have them,

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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§§3
778 they both work in us, they are not only in one partner. They work in the woman and in the man, they work in both of us.

§§5 Mwangwanda, an elderly pagan, explained the symbolism of the new hearth-brick at some length:

We take a new hearth-brick and plant it by the hearth in the bride's house. It means: 'You have grown up, you are a woman, you must always cook a pot,' and she cooks on that hearth-brick. . . . It means: 'You have grown up, the food that your mother sent will come no more, you must cook for your husband yourself.' It is planted for the senior wife only, not for others. If I find that my first wife is not a virgin we do not plant a brick for her—she has lain with another. But if she has a younger sister and she brings her as a junior wife and she is a virgin and I deflower her myself, then the first sister is still the senior wife and we plant a brick for her and her child will inherit as the senior son, for another shut up her womb [i.e. made her virgin again]. If she has no younger sister I may marry her, but she will not be my chief wife. The next one I marry will be my senior wife and for her the brick will be planted and her son will inherit.

•781
585 There is also an association, not made explicit by our informants, between a log of firewood and a marriageable woman. One of the tasks of the bride and her maids is to fetch heavy logs of firewood which are stored in her mother's loft. At least one log goes with her when she is taken by her 'mothers' to her husband, and this she keeps all her life, taking it with her if she moves. From it the shades are said to chip splinters when they wish to warm themselves at the dying fire at night. After she has gone to her husband and before she conceives, a bride is forbidden to touch the firewood in her mother's loft, and in the funeral ritual, when a widow returns home for the *ingonde* she steals a log of firewood from her mother's loft and takes it to her husband's. Into the cracks of this log the officiants press seeds. It seems probable that the reddish log represents a woman in her reproductive capacity, which is formally transferred to her husband and segregated from the reproductive activities of her mother. This, we repeat, is our own interpretation, not formulated by any Nyakyusa.

783 The taboo on a bride who has slept with her husband approach-
784 ing her mother until she has brought the ritual *ilibala* is associated with the danger of mixing the bloods of different lineages.

A bride avoids dipping water out of a pot and drinking from a calabash belonging to her relatives for the following reasons: A girl is of one blood (*ililopa*) with her mother, and when she goes to her husband, the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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has been a quarrel in the family, those members of the lineage who have been at variance must attend and share the meat or beer, and bless one another. Grandchildren, 'comrades of the shades', must eat the offering left overnight in the banana grove.

If a son has quarrelled with his father and comes to beg pardon the father calls his *neighbours* who must be present and partake of a feast and bless the young men. 'If father and son just agree with one another and people do not eat anything, then the son will not be settled in well.'

At a puberty–marriage ritual the principals are the nubile girl and her father or brother, her husband, and sometimes her mother or mother-in-law. A mother goes through the ritual with her eldest son's wife, or with her eldest daughter, if she is initiated at home. At an ordinary birth the principals are the mother and infant.

Besides these principals who undergo the full ritual there are many minor actors. At a funeral there are the grave-diggers who, traditionally among the Nyakyusa, were mature men, relatives or village neighbours.[1] They wash after the burial and are rewarded with a special leg of the funeral beef. As we have seen, the affines (*abaka*), that is the fathers-in-law and sons-in-law of the deceased or of 'the owner of the funeral', come with cattle to kill or cloth. When a woman dies, her husband and her father, or her brother, kill cattle, and their affines bring cloths or, occasionally, cattle. Kinsmen—members of the lineage and their wives—and neighbours bring gifts of food to cook for the crowd of mourners, and small gifts of millet which are presented to the shade and used for making the ritual beer. After an abnormal birth, village neighbours have their legs splashed with scalding medicine but do not drink medicines or shave. The cattle of the village are also splashed. At the puberty ritual the bride's maids keep her company during her seclusion. The co-wives and neighbours of her mother and mother-in-law assist in instructing her, and the neighbours of her father join with him first in avoiding her and then in giving her gifts. Her father-in-law is identified with his brothers and his father's brothers' sons, whom she avoids, as well as his sisters, and her mother-in-law's brothers, and sisters' husbands. They, in turn, avoid her sisters, as well as herself.

By the 'congregation' we mean those who attend rituals to express sympathy, and whose presence is felt to be necessary to the

[1] In Ngonde they are elected, cross-cousins.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

783 The Nyakyusa perhaps emphasize it more than their neighbours
[17] (though not more than the Jews or the Hindus), and their pre-occupation with purification in the rituals is paralleled by the emphasis laid on cleanliness (*ubwifyusi*) in person, in house and courtyard, in cooking, and in disposal of excrement. Their extreme cleanliness, in contrast with their neighbours, was remarked upon by all the early travellers in the area and is still obvious.[1] Houses and courtyards are swept and garnished; pots and dishes scoured, food scrupulously covered with fresh banana leaves when it is served at feasts; a good housewife is *umwifyusi*, she who is clean. Men wash daily in running water and children are trained to take a hoe with them when they go to defaecate, and to bury the faeces.

783 The horror of 'filth' is very closely associated with the fear of
158 madness, which is at the same time a fear of too close association
828 with the dead. It is when the dead have not been driven away, but return in dreams; when the necessary separation of living and dead has not been achieved, that men go mad. Madness is most often spoken of as the penalty for neglect of the death ritual, but it is not, in theory, confined to that: 'All the rituals are the same, if they are neglected, men will become mad.' Besides madness, men fear sterility, debility, swollen limbs ('an unhealthy fatness') and diarrhœa 'to get rid of the filth in the belly' if the rituals are neglected, or taboos broken.

796 That a common symbolic pattern expressing common sentiments recurs in all the rituals is clear, but it is also true that each ritual is characterized by peculiar sentiments and symbols. The funeral rites are first and foremost an expression of grief—kinsmen and neighbours gather to weep for the dead. Their grief is symbolized by the stylized wailing, the passionate dancing, the smearing with mud and ash, wearing mourning belts, and the song of farewell at the hearth. It is true that, in the later stages of the funeral, friends seek to comfort the chief mourners with cheerful songs and dances, and in one aspect the funeral ritual is an assertion of life, but grief not joy is its dominant note. By contrast, the ritual of puberty and marriage is a rejoicing—rejoicing 'because our child has grown up', because she is virgin, because there is feasting, because there is a marriage.

● 831 Elements peculiar to the puberty ritual are the celebration of virginity by killing a bull, and the prayer for blessing when its

[1] *cf.* Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 77-8.

½ [i.e., the conception of impurity associated with physiological functions.— Analyst]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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meat is offered in the bride's father's grove; the two symbols of first intercourse—treatment with *undumila* medicine and jumping over fire; the recognition of the end of childhood by calling on the bride's mother to put her down off her back; the insistence that she show modesty before her father and his fellows as before a father-in-law; and the taboo on crossing water lest her menstrual flow become like a river.

The twin ritual is characterized by the fear of infection from too great potency, and the treatment with scalding medicines to 'burn' the twin birth.

Sometimes our informants gave different interpretations of the same symbol and there was no agreement between them, as with the stem of bananas stolen in the Kukwe death ritual, and the bunch of flowers brought back from the stream. Nsyani said stealing the bananas symbolized that 'we may now eat other people's food', and Mwamulenga that it was a symbol of driving away disease. Kakune, the doctor, interpreted the bunch of flowers brought back from the stream as a symbol of the shade which was brought home; Mwamulenga saw picking and carrying flowers as yet another symbol of the actions of a madman. Though there was general agreement over the interpretation of many symbols, it is possible that some have no commonly accepted meaning, but suggest different things to different people. It is clear, however, that with the Nyakyusa, as with ourselves, one symbol has often several associations for the same person, and Kasitile and the more self-conscious of our informants were aware of this. For Kasitile the banana in the death ritual is the corpse and the pumpkin-seeds in it the shade; it is also faeces which madmen eat; it is also, in the puberty ritual, the male organ and the seeds are the semen. Eating a banana is a symbol *both* of copulation and of the actions of a madman. Conversely, the same object or action is symbolized in many different ways—there are nine or ten symbols of sex intercourse, and twenty of driving away the shade, recorded in the texts quoted above.

When an action recurs in different rituals, informants almost always interpreted it in the same way in each context: the exception was the trampling dance (*shalanya ingenya*) interpreted as a way of 'driving away the shade' in the death ritual and a 'rejoicing' in the puberty ritual. It was always explained as 'customary'. 'Father and grandfather did it.'

This brings us to the ultimate explanation given for all the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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Yet still she remains a daughter of her father's lineage and shares in its rituals as well as in those of her husband's.

Lineages are linked by marriage and kinship between them is established by the passage of cattle. The son-in-law becomes 'one blood' with his parents-in-law when they drink the beer brewed or eat the chicken killed at the consummation of the marriage; some of his semen is buried in his father-in-law's grove, and his spear is placed in his father-in-law's hut. The significance of the link is magnified by the thicket of taboos which surrounds 'mixing bloods', and once forged the link should be, and commonly is, retained long after the deaths of the individuals by whom it was created, for each is replaced, the husband by a brother or son, the wife by a sister or brother's daughter. For each heir the ritual of 'mixing bloods' is performed afresh reminding them of their separation and union.

Cattle are closely identified with men and therefore with lineages. The shades watch over them. Like men, they are in danger from women who are ritually impure; at the death of their owner they, too, mourn; and kinship relationships are established and expressed by their transfer from one lineage to another. 'Kinship is cattle.'

The distinction and opposition of lineages is apparent in the ritual of puberty and marriage which expresses both hostility and conciliation. The two lineages dance in rivalry, haggle over cattle, and exchange feasts. Among the Nyakyusa, the opposition is not between men and women, as suggested by some recent writers on rituals elsewhere,[1] but between lineages; though the men and the women, both of the groom's party and the bride's, act separately. The hostility and conciliation reach their culmination in the ritual of vituperation among the Lugulu, when groom's group and bride's insult each other by word and in action and then, at the instance of the master of ceremonies, praise each other and feast together.

Among the Nyakyusa there is no clan organization and no common name for a lineage of many generations like the Pondo *isibongo*, which identifies agnatic kinship within a large group. A common name is used by members of a lineage of three or four generations at the most, and among commoners there is no invocation of a distant ancestor as among the Pondo. The hero

[1] E. Fromm, *The Forgotten Language*; M. Gluckman, 'The Role of the Sexes in Wiko Circumcision Ceremonies', in *Social Structure*, edited by M. Fortes (1949).

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

however, by the fact that, in the neighbourhood of Europeans, boys can earn money, and so help the family exchequer.

Puberty is reached at about fifteen, and boys pass that stage without ceremony. Girls are segregated, usually in groups. They lie on leaves spread on the floor, and must not be seen by boys, unless they are the daughters of chiefs, who are permitted to see boys at night. The initiate receives instruction, usually from her mother, though there are plenty of willing advisers besides, in household matters. When this is over, the wife of the *mfasya* (the man who was go-between at her parents' marriage) comes, with others, to inquire about the girl's character, to which a favourable answer is given by the mother: she cooks for strangers, has never known a man, and is of good temper. Then she is examined, and if she is found to be impure (as she is; there is practically no exception), she is put up into the rafters, where she is half-choked in the fumes of a smoky fire specially kindled. Here she remains until permitted to come down, a severe beating following upon any attempt to escape. (The cleansing power of smoke is to be noted also in connection with twins.) The children of Christian parents are examined in the same way. Happily the situation is improving, though very slowly. After being thoroughly smoked, the girl is washed and oiled, and the *banyago* (older women) come to instruct her in all her duties to husband and children when she has them.

Immediately after the initiation rites the betrothal

4: Tew E.4 (no date) 1950 FN17 Ngonde FN17

witches, who use their power beneficently and spend their dreams in efforts to counteract the aggressor witches, *vaisi*, who use their power maliciously. The great commoner is the strongest of the former type, and the 'defender of the village'. A man who earns universal unpopularity is subject to a spiritual attack from the 'defenders', and is liable to fall sick from the blast of unpopularity. Belief in this efficacy of the 'breath of man' is one of the sanctions of the accepted social order.[1]

Only magic is believed to have power to punish wrongdoers who are neither kinsmen nor members of the same chiefdom. Magic exerts an influence on the behaviour of kinsmen and affines. The witchcraft of a neglected wife may cause a man to fall sick, or that of his father-in-law may harm his children.[2] The power of witchcraft never acts between relatives, though it might between husband and wife.[3]

An aggressor witch was reported in the old days by the great commoner to the chief, who ordered the poison ordeal. If the accused failed to vomit (the dose was seldom fatal), he was proved guilty and killed or exiled, all his cows and property being taken by the chief and the victim of his aggressive witchcraft. If a private individual accused another, both were put to the ordeal; if both vomited, the accuser had to pay two cows to the other for slander; if either failed to vomit he was punished as guilty. The ordeal is now illegal, but men accused of aggressive witchcraft still find it best to fly the chiefdom. Great commoners normally used their witchcraft powers to protect their chief from attack, but if he erred they would join in the attack on him; the nobles of Ngonde had power to exert a similar constitutional check on the Kyungu.[4]

If death by aggressive witchcraft was suspected, it was proved or disproved by a routine post-mortem examination and by subsequent consultation with the diviner.[5]

Birth

A child should be born in its own father's house. A difficult birth is a sign of the guilt of adultery, and is cured by confession.[6] A few days after the birth the mother is anointed, shaved, and resumes her household duties. She later goes on a visit of some weeks to show the child to her own parents, returning to her husband after celebrations by both sets of grandparents and exchanges of food and hoes. The birth of twins was a great misfortune, requiring the segregation and ritual purification of both parents.[7]

Initiation

There was no puberty or initiation rite for boys. The initiation of a girl was really a pre-marriage rite. She went through a complicated rite to ensure fertility, in which the husband took part. The initiation lasts some months, and includes several exchanges of food between the families of the girl and her betrothed husband, and ceremonies in which her girl friends of her home village and his friends of his village take part. The girl is tested for virginity during the ceremonies. If she is not betrothed before puberty the initiation is carried out in a modified form, but the full significance is lost.[8]

[1] Wilson, A., 1938, p. 107.
[2] Ibid., p. 108.
[3] Ibid., A., 1938, p. 91.
[4] Ibid., A., 1939, p. 58.
[5] Johnston, 1893, p. 443.
[6] Wilson and Hunter, 1939, p. 11; Mackenzie, 1925, pp. 42–3.
[7] Ibid., pp. 44–6. According to L. H. Johnston, if the children died in succession the father was supposed to kill himself, but it is possible that he is recounting a custom of the Southern Tonga (Johnston, p. 407).
[8] Ibid., 1925, p. 51; Wilson and Hunter, 1939, p. 11; Wilson, A., 1938, p. 158.

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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583 takes place on some occasion and her parents usually find out when it
584 does. In some families the girl's mother examines her after each visit to
836 her husband to see if the hymen is intact, sometimes the girl tells her mother herself. When her father hears about it his action is determined partly by his feelings towards his son-in-law, partly by his need for cattle. Sometimes he does nothing at all; occasionally he sends back the cows he has received for his daughter and breaks off the marriage, and this is particularly likely to happen if the girl has been forced against her will or generally ill-treated. More usually, however, he sends his daughter to live with her husband saying: "You have made her a woman yourself, you must pay the rest of the marriage-cattle quickly."

836 We have no evidence to suggest that the girls in any general way dislike sleeping with their husbands before puberty, rather the reverse; and the men say: "It is good, it accustoms a girl to her husband." But some girls dislike the particular men to whom they are betrothed.

●881 The initiation of a girl at puberty lasts for some months and includes several exchanges of food between her family and that of her husband, and a number of ceremonies in which both her girl friends of the same village[4] and her husband's friends from his village[4] participate. If a girl [584] is not bespoken before puberty the initiation is still carried out in a modified form, but its full significance is lost.

585 Soon after her initiation a girl, if she has been bespoken, goes to live altogether with her husband, to play her part in his economy and to bear him children. If only a few cows have been received for her, her father insists on one or two more being handed over before she is allowed to go. At some time, perhaps during the girl's initiation, perhaps years later, the final marriage ceremony (*ukukwa*) takes place. The balance of the marriage-cattle are brought to her father by the husband and his village neighbours,[4] her "mothers" prepare a great deal of food for the guests to eat, there is dancing, feasting and great excitement.

554 The number of cows handed over varies with the wealth and social
583 status of the two families concerned. Six to ten cows is the most usual number, but sometimes as few as four or as many as thirty change hands.

583 The second method of marriage is adopted when a man falls in love with a grown girl, who is not bespoken, and cannot find the cows to satisfy her father at once; he runs off with her and regularizes the position
583 later by sending cattle. The third method is adopted when a man falls
837 in love with a married woman and has cows available; he runs off with

[4] Vide index "The Age Village"
[p. 261, col. IIb — Analyst]

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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621 561 others as well. Any boys' village is found to consist primarily of the sons of the members of some older village who originally gave the land for its building, but as we shall see later sons of other villages live there too.

621 342 At the beginning, when a group of boys starts a new age-village, or when boys join one already formed, they do not all have a hut to themselves, two or three friends share a hut. But later, as they grow older, each builds for himself. The younger ones build their huts of reeds, but the older ones try to get a few bamboos from their fathers or senior relatives and build more solid houses. Married men build entirely of bamboo, but often in a boys' village you will find a compromise between bamboo and reed, both being used in the same house; and the houses of bachelors, even though they be all of bamboo, are smaller than those of married men. The technique of good building is not very difficult, and the older boys instruct and help their juniors, as they join the village, to improve the skill playfully acquired as herd-boys so as to build more substantial huts.

245 262 The chief food of the Nyakyusa is the banana; men plant bananas immediately round their huts, though their fields are mostly at a distance. And bachelors, while they continue to eat their main meals at their parents' village, plant bananas round their own huts as well. Bananas begin to bear very quickly, sometimes within a year of planting, and so, soon after the establishment of a boys' village, its members have bananas of their own, which they cook for themselves and eat with their friends at odd times during the day. But they have as yet no fields.

868 [881] 577 There is no formal initiation of boys at puberty; but, on the other hand, the custom of leaving home and joining a boys' village is directly connected by the Nyakyusa with their ideas of decency in sexual life. They think it is perfectly all right to discuss sex openly among friends of about the same age but altogether wrong to discuss it either in the presence of, or with, their parents or those of their parents' generation. If a boy learns about love-making, in any way, from his parents the Nyakyusa think that he will not respect them properly and that he himself will be a fool. A boy must learn these things from his immediate seniors and friends. One man said to me: "If a boy after about ten years old stays at home to sleep, he is laughed at by his friends and his own parents send him away. They say: 'If he sleeps at home he will hear what his parents talk about at night, the night is always full of lewd talk; and he may even see them undressing. He will grow up a fool, with little wisdom.' You see at the boys' village" he went on to say, "the older

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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622 have invaded that country for cows and brought them back and eaten them at the new huts which we built next. But that is finished now." In this way the new chiefs are shown to their people.

631 Finally the young men are told exactly where to go and build, and the boundaries between the new chiefdoms and the villages of each are fixed; the old boys' villages are abandoned and the houses gradually pulled down and put up in their new places. At first the men of the four age-villages of each young chief just put up rough shelters to sleep in, all together on the place where the senior age-village of each new chiefdom will later be built, but after a month or two they separate, each village to its own place, and there they build their houses.

The land is now their own, they are no longer members of boys' villages, living on land given them at the side of the parent villages by their fathers, they are owners of the soil, full citizens, with chief and great commoners to rule them.

(B) *Organization and Life of a Single Chiefdom*

622 583 A few months after the "Coming Out" each of the two young chiefs marries two wives. He may be married already, but the two whom he now takes rank as his great wives (*amake amakolamba*) and their sons are his two heirs in the chieftainship. Young girls, daughters of neighbouring chiefs, are carried off with a show of force from their fathers' homes by the young chief's men, who, themselves, later send cows to regularize the position. The two great wives are thus married, not with the cows of their husband, but with those of the men whose sons their sons will one day rule.

622 585 • 931 Girls are carried off who are just about to reach puberty, and they stay at the house of one of the men of the old chief until their periods begin. When both have reached puberty they are initiated, not at their fathers' houses, but in the country of their husband, both together. At their initiation, the old men and women of the country (contemporaries of the old, retiring, chief) play the part normally played by a girl's parents and their neighbours, while the young chief and his men take the usual part of a husband and his friends. And then, after the ceremonies are over, the two girls are given to the young chief as his wives. Houses are built for them separately: in the senior age-village of the new chiefdom for the first wife, in the next senior village for the second wife; and in this separation of dwelling place is already apparent the future division of the chiefdom between their sons.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F7417 Ngonde F7417
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Christian ones, do not celebrate and nothing happens to them, so we no longer fear ourselves.' By 1937 the pagan rituals of kinship had been largely dropped in Ngonde, and around Rungwe mission they were disappearing, though in Selya no pagan dared neglect them. They were taken more seriously by the women than by the men, and many of the young men were openly scornful. The young men are eclectic in their beliefs, jeering at the twin ritual when they may be fearful of any neglect of the ritual of death; doubting the power of rain-makers, but terrified of a neighbour's sorcery.

(c) CHRISTIAN RITUAL AND DOGMA

And what are the alternatives to the traditional rituals? Celebrations at death, marriage, and birth continue—probably some sort of ritual on these occasions is universal in human societies. There is no celebration of a girl's puberty, as among the pagans, but the ritual of confirmation is, in one sense, parallel, for it is an acknowledgment of maturity by the acceptance of an individual into the full fellowship of the Church; but maturity in the Church, and the symbolic death and rebirth, are not necessarily linked with physiological development, as they are in the pagan ritual of *ubusungu*.[1]

All the Christian rituals are *communal* in the sense that they are centred in the Church—the Christian community; none is primarily a ritual of kinship. This is most pointed at a christening, when a child is received into the fellowship of the Church, whereas in the pagan birth ritual it is acknowledged as a member of the father's lineage by being given *ilipili* medicine ('which is 'the blood of the lineage') by its paternal grandmother. Sometimes both rituals are celebrated by Christians who interpret the *ilipili* as an acknowledgment of legitimacy, and a medicine necessary to the child's health, but this is frowned upon by the more orthodox. A dying man is comforted by the priest or elders of the Church, and in some communions he receives the sacrament, the symbol of his salvation through Christ and his membership of the community of believers. At a funeral the members of the local Christian congregation take the leading part, comforting the mourners with prayers and hymns, digging the grave, and burying the dead. The contrast with a pagan funeral, in which cattle are

[1] The pagan rituals referred to in this section are described in *Rituals of Kinship among the Nyakyusa*.

9:Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F3017 Ngende p3017
Nyakyusa

was not an individual one. True, a girl gave her formal consent in the marriage ritual, but the pressure on her to accept the husband selected for her by her kinsmen was almost irresistible. In the thirties Christian women who refused their husband's heir and lived alone, or married an unrelated man of their choice, were regarded by their pagan sisters as very daring, and little girls in pagan families took it as a matter of course that they should replace their dead sisters; today the right of a widow to choose whom she will marry is generally accepted, and the custom of replacing a dead woman by her sister has lapsed. 'Every girl wants her own husband nowadays', the old women say. Thus lineage obligations give way to individual freedom of choice in marriage. At the same time the rituals which emphasized the lineage are dropped or modified. The fearful fecundity of a double birth no longer appals men and the twin ritual which used to bring together all the living members of a lineage of three generations is not celebrated at all. At a puberty ritual a pagan girl may be given the *dipiki* medicine, the symbol of 'the blood of the lineage' by her mother, but there is no ostentatious and elaborate feasting, no sacrifice of the bull of puberty that her father's shades may 'move aside a little' to make way for the shades of her husband's lineage. Only at a funeral do kinsmen still gather and celebrate, for many still fear the shades, and at a funeral the heir is installed and the importance of property and the inheritance of it has not diminished one whit. As we have seen, the traditional religion was formulated in terms of kinship; the gods were our kinsmen; but today God, *Kyala*, is no ancestor; to pagans as well as to Christians he is supreme and supreme. Men are still classified by their lineages, and one of the topics of village gossip is how Prince Charles can be heir to the British throne when his father is not of the house of Windsor; but already in the economic field, and increasingly in the religious, it is the family of parents and children which is now dominant, not the lineage.

Divorce is far more frequent than formerly, partly because women claim a greater freedom of behaviour than before, as well as the right of choosing their own husbands, and are supported by the courts. As one village headman put it, 'Formerly a father beat his daughter with a stick if she ran home and sent her back to her husband who also beat her.' The women reject the old pattern of subservience which was expressed in crouching to greet a man, and addressing him in a very deferential fashion; the men observe,

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951.F367 Ngonde F367
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ancestors and of Kyala". At the same time he moved his carved wood 787
to and fro on the ground and when he did so, it indicated a negative [778]
answer from the beings invoked. But when he was asked: "Is the guilt
for the sickness to be found in the husband of the child's sister?", he
was unable to move his wood as before, he could only stamp it on the
ground, and this meant an affirmative reaction of the invoked spirits.
Now, therefore, the meeting had reached its aim.

I asked the diviner to tell me how he had acquired his faculty. He 741
explained that (besides the necessary inner disposition) the payment
of a fee for the medical preparation was necessary in order to become
a diviner[1]. This outfit consisted in a special vaccination by a learned
diviner. For this purpose the neophyte was incised by his master on [804]
different spots on the upper side of the knuckles, and in these small
incisions was rubbed a medical powder. By these means the initiate
may be inspired by the prophesying spirits. These influences are then
felt by the diviner as a power which directs the movements of his hand
in the manner described.

8. Near the hut of the chief's principal wife was a "sacred" banana 634
plant, in the grove opposite to the chief's hut and in the grove with 778
the grave of the chief's father already described. At particular times, 782
when any need demands it, the chief offers a prayer to this plant to 767
his ancestors[2]. The sickness of his sister, for instance, was such an
occasion for him to address the ancestors. I was invited by the chief
to witness this act, but I raised objections, telling him that my presence
might perhaps rather cause the anger than the help of his ancestors. [20]
In reality, I did not want the chief to stage a theatrical act on my
behalf. But the chief rejected my excuses and explained that he would
act in the same manner as if I were not present, because he had made
up his mind to this prayer. The chief was assisted during this ceremony
by Mwaninyakule who presented to the chief a calabash of water as he
arrived at the banana plant devoted to this purpose. The chief took
some mouthfuls of the water and squirted it towards the banana plant.
Then he recited the names of his ancestors and begged them to help
his sister.

9. During one afternoon, I was told that a ceremony to end the 933
initiation of a (betrothed) girl was going on in a family of the village.

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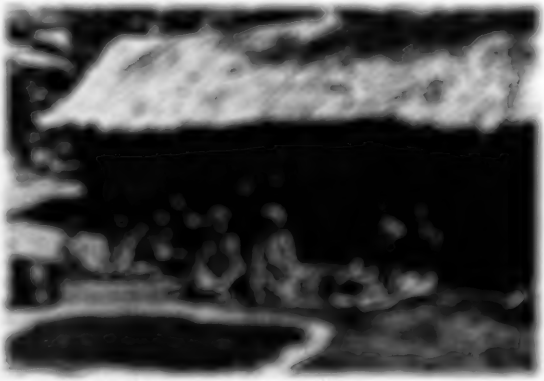
[1] name of the supreme spiritual being.

[2] Cf. Wachtmeister, p. 206.

[3] Wachtmeister relates that such a place is named "Kyalaya", "the family place (of prayer)" (pp. 206, 207), but without indication of the locality, as Kyalaya.

I went to the place and got permission to enter the hut in which the first part of the ceremony took place. I found there the parents of the girl, the girl sitting enveloped in clothes in one corner of the hut, and some older females, one of whom was the acting umugapi. Some male guests were also present[1]. As the girl had had her first catamenia the present ceremony marked at the same time the end of her preparation for marriage.

The umugapi prepared a beverage of beer in which a light-brown medicinal powder (mulombanga) was put. First the girl had to drink from it, then the parents followed. This beverage was believed to strengthen (ulwatinga) the newcomers. Then a spear was handed to the girl by her father, and the girl handed it in turn to some relatives of the bridegroom waiting near the hut. These persons had to bring the spear to the girl's bridegroom as a sign that he could now marry the girl[2], but not before he had brought a bull to the girl's father. After this the girl, now sitting in the middle of the hut, was given small gifts from the participants in the ceremony.



Ceremonial instruction of premarriage girls in Konde-Nyakyusa custom.

Following this the whole body of the girl was anointed before the door of the hut. The umugapi began by anointing her legs, then the girl herself continued it. The ointment was prepared from castor oil and a powder of red wood (Kipanda, found commonly in the environment of Lake Rukwa). At this moment a male participant in the ceremony climbed in, came out of the hut, and suddenly a young woman

[1] Cf. Wilson, Introduction, p. 206; The Study of African Society, p. 1; The Rhodes-Livingstone Paper No. 3, 1942.

[2] Marriage in this tribe is regarded more virilocal, although matrilocal

I.D.Lehmann B.-S (1939) 0951.F917 Rigveda F917
Rigvedyana

sitting down on the ground got up as quickly as possible held her hands before her eyes and rushed off. This was because this man was her father-in-law. The strict social rules in such circumstances is well known[1].

The next act consisted in shaving the girl's hair as her complete by the conjugal, the father was shaved by a younger brother of his in the same manner. (I cannot remember whether it was also the case with the mother of the girl.)

The old fashioned hut of the Rishi's wife.

Then the further ceremony took place again inside the hut, till the participants sat down as male, and the conjugal accepted the compliments of the parents on the former conduct of their daughter. Sometimes the discussion between these parties, where the conjugal played the role of a mediator as in the case with the couple (or speaker) in the room, reached such a pitch of excitement that I thought a serious quarrel had broken out. The excitement was, perhaps, only of a ceremonial character. I was told, however, that in former times corporal punishment has been inflicted, if, indeed, the girl had shown misconduct in the times before.

Now, the girl was instructed by the conjugal in her duties as a wife. These instructions were of a theoretical or moral nature concerning the correct conduct of the girl towards her parents also after the ceremony and towards her future husband. The practical part of the initiation instructions sometimes comes before the ceremony at the end of initiation. These practical instructions cover the preparing of food

[1] Cf. Hiranyaka, p. 240. (Hiranyaka, p. 240 (cf. Hiranyaka?). According to Hiranyaka her daughter-in-law has to observe the rules that concern the mothers of her father-in-law. All these persons are called chamakas.

and other duties applicable to a girl after marriage. The practical instruction takes place in or before a special hut in the village under the leadership of the *shwangaja* (*swangaga*). The girl is admonished by the *swangaja* to obey her parents without any delay, to perform the commands of her mother immediately, e. g. to clean the hut, and especially to show obedience when guests are present. Should the mother blame her daughter unjustly, she she is not reply. (The girl had been blamed in the earlier discussion that she had not swept the hut when her mother required her to do it). Then her duties and conduct towards her future husband were mentioned. As a wife she must never accept anything from the hands of her husband without kneeling and stretching out both hands, and turning away her face with eyes cast down. Also as a wife she must not hold her head up

Group of the drummers

when she is addressed by a man. As a wife she must be anxious to prepare her husband's meal always at the right time, that means, it has to be ready when her husband returns from the field. If she sees her husband coming from the field, then she has to go to meet him, and take his hatchet from him. Should her husband scold her, she is not to reply, but she may ask her neighbours for help. It is one of her duties to take care of the regular cleaning of the hut[1]. The wife must always be reserved by her from the Dreplank. If there are only a few wives as the Dreplank she must reserve them with her hands[2].

[1] The place near the house where the sweepings are thrown down is called *ipumpilo*.

[2] Cf. Wachsmuth, p. 61, who refers to such moral instructions connected with puberty customs, probably at marriage; cf. Fülleborn, p. 66 (Ngoodo given).

13:Lehmann B.-S (1939) 1951.3'367 Ngende 3'367
Nyakyusa

After these ceremonies, the mats which the girl had manufactured were inspected. During this examination it was told her that a wife should be seen in the possession of as many beautiful mats as possible, made by her for herself and for her husband. Should the girl reveal such conduct as a wife, ulwemapilafu (happiness) would be in her hut.

When the proper ceremony seemed to have come to an end, another discussion followed. The girl had told the company, during the above mentioned admonition, that her parents also sometimes exchanged angry words. Therefore, a new discussion between the father and the mother arose, to which also the company was the "speaker", but the other participants of the ceremony also shared in it, and the discussion too became at times heated. Still, after about 15 minutes, it suddenly came to an end, and the matter in dispute was declared settled. With this the whole ceremony ended.

3. One day I asked the chief for permission to visit his huts. He dwelt in a rectangular hut (ibihuga). A very beautiful division (bed) was in the main room, composed of many sleeping mats (ubulili, pl. imilili) and of big round wooden blocks (portions of a tree-trunk), one at the head and a smaller one at the foot of the bed. Each of the four fine mats which lay uppermost had a special name. All the mats rested on sticks of reed laid across beams lying on smaller poles on the floor[1]. These mats were naturally of exactly the same height as the wooden block which formed the head part of the division. In some other old-fashioned and better houses in Nyakyusa villages, similar beds were to be seen, but generally the bedsteads are much more simple.

One of the most important permissions granted me by the chief was to enter the "store room", connected with his main room by a door. The objects to be seen here were the same as those to be found in other huts or store-rooms, e. g. the big ifinsho (bankets) for storing grain, up to four feet high, smeared over with cow-dung and clay, and smaller bankets for different purposes. In one corner hung different kinds of dancing fans (uvubuye, sg.) made of hairs from the tails of bulls, with fine handles of horn. In the dark opposite corner of the same wall there seemed to hang a similar object, but it was wrapped in banana bast. This was the real sign of the chief's dignity, the symbol of his authority and power, named ulwemapala. A long discussion was needed to induce the chief to unveil it. Only by constantly consulting by glances the present employes the chief slowly unveiled it. He told us that

[1] Cf. Fülleborn, p. 30.

[2] Bedsteps 5.1